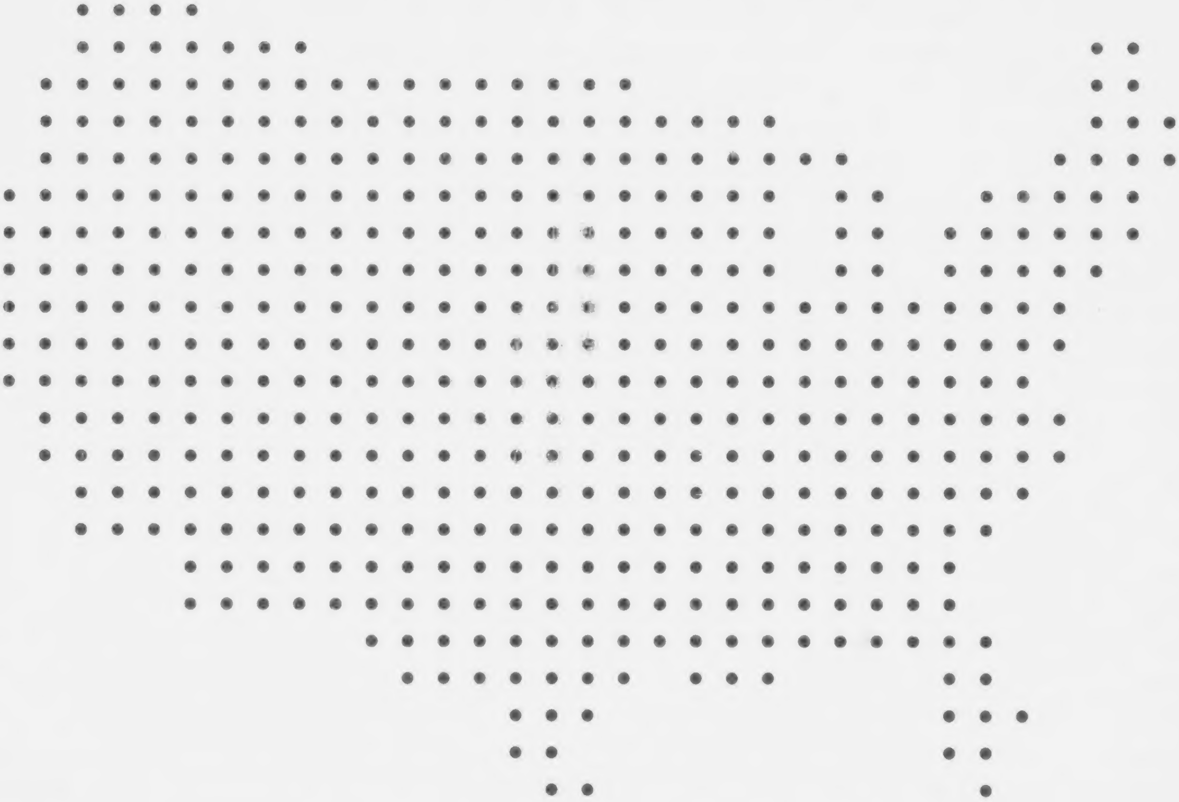
PREVENTION IN AMERICA 7:

Steps People Take—or Fail to Take—For Better Health

Conducted for **Prevention**® Magazine



A Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

Study No. 892046

PREVENTION IN AMERICA VII: STEPS PEOPLE TAKE -- OR FAIL TO TAKE -- FOR BETTER HEALTH

Conducted for:

Prevention Magazine

Fieldwork:

November-December 1989

Project Directors:

Humphrey Taylor: President
Robert Leitman: Senior Vice President
Phoebe A. Wilkinson: Research Associate

LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES, INC.
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10111
(212) 698-9600

CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION 1
  Accuracy, Sampling Error, and Other Sources of Error 2
  A Note on Reading the Tables 3
  Public Release of Survey Findings 3
  Project Responsibility and Acknowledgments 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 4
  Automobile Safety 4
  Smoking Behavior 5
  Alcohol Consumption 5
  Illegal Drug Use 5
  Stress 6
  Exercise 6
  Nutrition 6
  Weight Control 7
  Home Safety Precautions 7
  Regular Medical Exams 7

CHAPTER 1: OVERALL TRENDS IN PREVENTIVE HEALTH HABITS 12
  Self-Reported Health Status 12

CHAPTER 2: WEIGHT CONTROL 17

CHAPTER 3: EXERCISE 21
  Exercise and Walking 21

CHAPTER 4: NUTRITION 32
  Nutrition and Exercise 33

CHAPTER 5: REGULAR MEDICAL EXAMS 38
  Blood Pressure Reading 38
  Cholesterol Testing 38
  Dental Checkups 39
  Pap Smear and Breast Self-Exam for Women 39

CHAPTER 6: STRESS 47
  Feelings of Stress 47
  Steps People Take to Control Stress 48

CHAPTER 7: SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE 53
  Smoking and Nonsmoking 53
  Cigarette Smokers 53

CHAPTER 8: ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE 61
  Alcohol Use 61
  Drug Use 62
  Drug Experimentation 62
  Relationship Among Restricting Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use 64

(CONTINUED)

CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

		Page
CHAPTER 9:	HOME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS	73
	Safety in the Home	73
CHAPTER 10:	AUTO SAFETY	79
	Auto Safety	79
APPENDIX A:	METHODOLOGY	86
	Introduction	87
	Random-Digit Dialing	88
	Sample Development	89
	Stratification of Telephone Sample	90
	Control of the Sample	91
	Respondent Selection	91
	Callback Strategy	91
	Weighting	92
	Sampling Error	93
	Significance of Difference Between Proportions	94
APPENDIX B:	THE QUESTIONNAIRE	98

TABLES

Table Page

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S-1 TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS (1983-1989) 8

S-2 TRENDS IN OTHER PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS (1984-1989) 11

CHAPTER 1: OVERALL TRENDS IN PREVENTIVE HEALTH HABITS

1-1 TRENDS IN THE TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE HABITS (1986-1989) 14

1-2 PERCENT OF PREVENTIVE HABITS PRACTICED BY VARIOUS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS 15

1-3 SELF-REPORTED HEALTH STATUS BY PREVENTIVE HABITS 16

CHAPTER 2: WEIGHT CONTROL

2-1 PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT, WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WEIGHT RANGE, AND UNDERWEIGHT 18

2-2 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO KEEP THEIR WEIGHT WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED RANGE 19

CHAPTER 3: EXERCISE

3-1 REGULAR EXERCISE 24

3-2 FREQUENCY OF STRENUOUS EXERCISE 25

3-3 FREQUENCY OF WALKING AS EXERCISE 26

3-4 CHANGE IN FREQUENCY OF WALKING AND DISTANCE WALKED 27

3-5 HISTORY OF WALKING AS A FORM OF EXERCISE 28

3-6 SPECIAL SHOES DESIGNED FOR WALKING 29

3-7 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO HAVE WALKED SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK AS EXERCISE AND THOSE WHO EXERCISE STRENUOUSLY THREE OR MORE DAYS PER WEEK 30

CHAPTER 4: NUTRITION

4-1 TRENDS IN SOME KEY ASPECTS OF DIET AND NUTRITION 35

(CONTINUED)

TABLES (CONTINUED)

Page

4-2 NUTRITION INDEX BY EXERCISE BEHAVIOR.............................. 36

4-3 NUTRITION/EXERCISE INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS........... 37

CHAPTER 5: REGULAR MEDICAL EXAMS

5-1 TRENDS IN MEDICAL EXAMS AND TESTS................................ 41

5-2 THREE TYPES OF EXAMS OR TESTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS...... 42

5-3 TRENDS IN TESTS AND SELF-EXAMS FOR WOMEN.......................... 44

5-4 WOMEN'S SPECIAL TESTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS.............. 45

CHAPTER 6: STRESS

6-1 TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF STRESS.................................. 50

6-2 WHO TAKES STEPS TO CONTROL STRESS................................. 51

CHAPTER 7: SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

7-1 TRENDS IN SMOKING AND NONSMOKING.................................. 55

7-2 PERCENT OF THOSE RESTRICTING THEIR TOBACCO USE BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND KEY PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS................. 56

7-3 TOBACCO USE.. 58

7-4 TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS: SMOKERS VS. NONSMOKERS.. 59

CHAPTER 8: ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

8-1 TRENDS IN USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS................................ 65

8-2 PERCENT OF THOSE RESTRICTING THEIR ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND KEY PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS..... 66

8-3 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO NEVER USE ILLEGAL DRUGS BY AGE (1984, 1987, 1988, 1989)... 68

8-4 ILLEGAL DRUG USE... 69

(CONTINUED)

TABLES (CONTINUED)

Table Page

8-5 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO HAVE TRIED A DRUG AT LEAST ONCE OR TWICE BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS.................................... 70

8-6 RELATIONSHIP AMONG PRACTICES OF RESTRICTING ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE.. 72

CHAPTER 9: HOME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

9-1 TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF SAFETY AT HOME......................... 75

9-2 PERCENT OF THOSE TAKING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AT HOME BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS.................................... 76

9-3 CHANGE IN USE OF SMOKE DETECTORS (1983, 1986, 1988, 1989).......... 78

CHAPTER 10: AUTO SAFETY

10-1 TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF AUTO SAFETY.............................. 81

10-1A SEAT BELT LAWS IN 48 STATES AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.............. 82

10-2 PERCENT OF THOSE TAKING AUTO SAFETY PRECAUTIONS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS.................................... 84

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

RECOMMENDED ALLOWANCE FOR SAMPLING ERROR OF PROPORTIONS (PLUS OR MINUS).. 93

SAMPLING ERROR OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROPORTIONS.................. 95

A-1 PROFILE OF THE 1989 ADULT SAMPLE.................................. 97

INTRODUCTION

This is the seventh annual survey of the American public commissioned by Prevention Magazine, published by Rodale Press, as part of their ongoing project known as the Prevention Index. Each year the Prevention Index measures the efforts Americans are making to safeguard themselves from accidents and diseases, as well as the steps which they are implementing in their lifestyles to promote and enhance good health and longevity.

In order to examine the ways in which Americans are conducting their lives, Louis Harris and Associates interviewed 1,250 randomly selected adults across the country by telephone, from November 6 through December 13, 1989. The interviews focused on several risk factors and health habits believed to shape the long-term health outlook for American people. In each of the seven annual surveys, twenty-four key factors have been highlighted, providing the Prevention Index with powerful trend data and analysis.

The detailed survey methodology and a copy of the questionnaire are included as an appendix to this report.

Accuracy, Sampling Error, and Other Sources of Error

All surveys are subject to a variety of sources of error, and it is fashionable for the media to include in their reports of surveys such phrases as "This survey has a margin of +/- 3%." Unfortunately, this valiant attempt to educate readers is more likely to mislead them. Even a census is susceptible to several different sources of error, most of which cannot be accurately estimated.

Even the best designed surveys are liable to several possible sources of error. The most important are:

- Nonresponse (if those who are interviewed differ from those who are not interviewed).
- Random or sampling error, which may in theory be substantial, even on very large surveys. Contrary to the impression given by the typical media caveat, there is no way to calculate the maximum possible error for any survey. All we deal in are probabilities.
- Question wording, particularly where the survey is measuring an attitude or a future intention and not a "fact." Several equally good questions may yield different (and equally valid) responses. In addition, question sequence can influence the responses, particularly to attitude questions.

Even in the best survey organizations, human errors can creep in which are virtually impossible to quantify. Such human errors include less-than-perfect interviewing and inappropriate weighting of the data. Fortunately, nobody believes that polls are infallible, and there is certainly nothing wrong with the media reminding their readers and viewers of our fallibility.

The results of this survey, therefore, like the results of all surveys and all censuses, are susceptible to a variety of sources of error, some of which cannot be quantified. However, the results presented in this report do reflect the most reliable information available.

A Note on Reading the Tables

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (-) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding, multiple answers from respondents, or the elimination of "no answers."

Public Release of Survey Findings

All Louis Harris and Associates surveys are designed to adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Because data from the survey will be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is available.

Project Responsibility and Acknowledgments

The Harris team responsible for the design and analysis of the questionnaire was Humphrey Taylor, President; Robert Leitman, Senior Vice President; and Phoebe A. Wilkinson, Research Associate.

Louis Harris and Associates would like to thank Prevention magazine for commissioning this research. We would in particular like to thank Robert Rodale, editor of Prevention, Sanford Beldon, Prevention's publisher, and Tom Dybdahl, who manages the project for Prevention, for their continued support.

Louis Harris and Associates is responsible for final determination of the topics, question wordings, collection of the actual data, and analysis and interpretation of the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 1989 Prevention Index marks the latest measurement of America's progress in practicing preventive health habits in this decade. The seven Prevention Index surveys have shown the continued progress that Americans are making. Once again, 1989 shows that the average adult American practices approximately two-thirds of the twenty-four behavior items that the series has tracked over the years. The oldest group of Americans is still more likely than the youngest group to practice more than three-quarters of the preventive habits, although the gap is closing slowly. There are many signs of improvement, as well as signs of decline, which are reported below.

AUTOMOBILE SAFETY (See Chapter 10)

Seat belt use continues to rise. This year 63% of adult Americans report that they always use seat belts when in the front seat of the car -- up from 60% last year and from only 19% in 1983. At the other extreme, only 11% say they "never" wear a seat belt -- down from 13% the year before and from 53% in 1983. There is overwhelming public support for mandatory seat belt laws. Only 18% of Americans oppose them, including only 27% in states without such laws.

The biggest improvement in seat belt laws this year has come in states with no seat belt laws, but these remain well below the national average.

Driving over the legal speed limit, on the other hand, is a problem which is not getting better and may be getting worse. For the first time, less than half of all drivers (49%) claim that they always drive at or below the speed limit -- down from 56% in 1983.

The proportion of drivers who admit to drinking and driving has not changed significantly this year, but it is still lower than it was in the early 1980s.

SMOKING BEHAVIOR (See Chapter 7)

If smoking is continuing to decline, the pace of change is still slow -- too slow to be detected in this survey. Twenty-eight percent of all adults still smoke cigarettes and a further 6% smoke pipes, cigars, or use chewing tobacco, bringing the proportion to just over one-third (34%) of Americans who use some form of tobacco.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION (See Chapter 8)

The proportion of Americans who drink only moderately or not at all (90%) was higher this year than in any of the previous six surveys, but the differences were not statistically significant (and may therefore not be real). However, this improvement is consistent with other reports (for example, of declining liquor sales).

ILLEGAL DRUG USE (See Chapter 8)

This year's survey results are virtually identical to the two previous surveys -- which showed a decline in drug use from previous years.

These data are consistent with the more detailed surveys conducted for the National Institute for Drug Addiction which have shown a substantial decline in drug use (among adults, college students, and high school seniors) since 1985.

Observation:

Other surveys suggest that the public is totally ignorant of the declining use of illegal drugs and probably believe that drug use is increasing. Several polls have shown that drug use is widely perceived to be the nation's #1 problem. The media regularly prints or broadcasts stories which falsely suggest that drug use is growing in America. What has actually increased is not the numbers of people using drugs, but the violence associated with the drug trade in some cities.

STRESS (See Chapter 6)

The proportion of Americans who report that they feel "a great deal of stress" once a week or more often (60%) has not changed significantly. However, the number of people who are attempting to control stress in their lives is slightly down (4 percentage points) since last year.

EXERCISE (See Chapter 3)

The proportion of adults who get strenuous exercise three or more days a week has not changed. However, more people than before are doing some walking as a form of exercise (up from 68% last year to 75%), and almost half of all Americans (49%) walk for exercise several times each week.

NUTRITION (See Chapter 4)

Over the past seven years the public has become more conscious of the need to avoid high-cholesterol foods (up 8 points) and fatty foods (up 3 points), and of the need to get enough calcium (up 5 points).

However, there has been a decline in efforts to "get enough vitamins and minerals," and to avoid sugar-rich and sweet foods (both down 5 points since 1983).

Surprisingly, perhaps, there has been no increase in those who try to eat enough fiber, and interest in eating fish has declined (down five points since 1987).

WEIGHT CONTROL (See Chapter 2)

There is no evidence that Americans are winning the "battle of the bulge." The proportion of adult Americans who are overweight remains stuck at close to 60%, while 34% weigh 10% or more than their recommended weight.

HOME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS (See Chapter 9)

Americans are more conscious of the need to take special steps to avoid accidents in and around their homes than they were seven years ago, although there is no change in this year's survey.

The proportion of people living in homes with smoke detectors has continued to rise, up 18 points since 1983, to 85% in 1989.

However, the proportion of those who smoke in bed (the biggest cause of domestic fires) remains unchanged at 10%.

REGULAR MEDICAL EXAMS (See Chapter 5)

The proportion of the public who claim to have had their cholesterol measured once a year or more often has increased again this year to 53% (up 5 points since 1985), in line with the increased number of people who claim to be trying not to eat too much fat and cholesterol.

While the proportion of people who have an annual dental exam (75%) is the same as it was in 1987, the number who have more than one such exam a year has increased to its highest level yet (53%).

Table S-1

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS
(1983-1989)

	1983 Survey	1984 Survey	1985 Survey	1986 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	Percentage Point Change From 1983 to 1989	Percentage Point Change From 1988 to 1989
Base:	1254	1253	1256	1250	1250	1250	1250		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Nonsmoking and Restricted Use of Alcohol									
Do not smoke cigarettes	70	72	70	72	72	74	72	+2	-2
Drink alcohol moderately	54	57	55	56	50	50	51	-3	+1
(Drink alcohol moderately or do not drink at all)	88	87	88	88	86	89	90	+2	+1
Exercise and Weight Control									
Get strenuous exercise three or more days a week	34	33	31	33	35	36	35	+3	-1
Are within the weight range recommended for their height, build, and sex*	23	23	21	23	24	21	24	+1	+3
(Are not overweight)	42	41	38	41	40	36	39	-3	+3
Diet and Nutrition									
Try a lot to get enough vitamins and minerals	63	57	63	63	59	57	58	$\boxed{-5}$	+1
Try a lot to eat enough fiber	59	58	59	59	60	60	60	+1	0
Try a lot to avoid eating too much fat	53	59	56	56	54	54	58	$\boxed{+5}$	+4
Try a lot to avoid eating too much salt or sodium	53	54	54	57	54	48	52	-1	+4
Try a lot to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	51	52	50	49	49	47	46	$\boxed{-5}$	-1
Try a lot to get enough calcium	50	45	57	57	54	53	55	$\boxed{+5}$	+2
Try a lot to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods	42	43	42	46	42	48	50	$\boxed{+8}$	+2

(Continued)

---

*Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification. Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1047 (1984), 1061 (1985), 1022 (1986), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989).

Table S-1 (Continued)

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS (1983-1989)

	1983 Survey	1984 Survey	1985 Survey	1986 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	Percentage Point Change From 1983 to 1989	Percentage Point Change From 1988 to 1989
Base:	1254	1253	1256	1250	1250	1250	1250		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Control of Stress									
Socialize with friends or relatives once a week or more	84	85	85	81	83	84	85	+1	+1
Get seven or eight hours sleep most nights	64	63	64	65	61	62	64	0	+2
Take specific steps to control or reduce stress	59	70	69	64	68	69	65	+6	-4
Periodic Examinations And Tests									
Have a blood pressure reading at least once a year	82	85	87	84	84	83	84	+2	+1
Have a dental checkup at least once a year	71	73	74	76	75	71	75	+4	+4
Women who have a Pap smear test every one or two years	75	77	78	80	75	79	76	+1	-3
Women who examine their breasts at least once each month for signs of cancer	37	42	48	45	42	51	44	+7	-7

(Continued)

Table S-1 (Continued)

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS
(1983-1989)

	1983 Survey	1984 Survey	1985 Survey	1986 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	Percentage Point Change From 1983 to 1989	Percentage Point Change From 1988 to 1989
Base:	1254	1253	1256	1250	1250	1250	1250		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Safety Precautions									
Say that no one in their home smokes in bed	88	89	91	91	92	90	90	+2	0
Say they take specific steps to avoid accidents in and around the home	72	81	80	80	81	82	80	$\boxed{+8}$	-2
Say they have a smoke detector in their home	67	74	76	77	82	81	85	$\boxed{+18}$	+4
Drivers who say they drive at or below the speed limit all the time	56	52	50	51	50	51	49	$\boxed{-7}$	-2
Drivers who say they either never drive after drinking or don't drink at all	68	68	71	74	74	78	79	$\boxed{+11}$	+1
Say they wear seat belts all the time when in the front seat of a car	19	27	41	55	57	60	63	$\boxed{+44}$	+3

Table S-2

TRENDS IN OTHER PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS (1984-1989)

	1984 Survey	1985 Survey	1986 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	Percentage Point Change From First Year Question Was Asked to 1989	Percentage Point Change From 1988 to 1989
Base:	1253	1256	1250	1250	1250	1250		
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Exercise								
Those who get regular exercise	X	77	76	79	75	76	-1	+1
Done walking as exercise in past month	X	X	69	65	68	75	$\boxed{+6}$	$\boxed{+7}$
Diet and Nutrition								
Try a lot to avoid caffeine in beverages	34	37	34	34	33	33	-1	0
Try a lot to avoid food with additives	37	33	36	36	35	33	-4	-2
Eat fish twice a week	X	34	31	33	28	28	$\boxed{-6}$	0
Eat vegetables in the cabbage family	X	62	65	59	60	61	-1	+1
Periodic Examinations and Tests								
Have a cholesterol check at least once a year	X	48	46	45	49	53	$\boxed{+5}$	+4

X = Not asked that particular year.

CHAPTER 1: OVERALL TRENDS IN PREVENTIVE HEALTH HABITS

While there have been some changes in the trends of preventive health habits that are practiced by adults in the United States, the overall picture is one that has remained relatively constant.

The 1989 Prevention Index finds that exactly one-quarter of Americans are practicing at least three-quarters of the preventive habits (Table 1-1). While not significant, this is slightly greater than the 23% who reported doing so in 1986. Over half (54%) practice at least 50% but not more than three-quarters of the preventive habits, and 21% practice up to half. The average percentage of health habits practiced by all adult Americans remains at 64% for the fourth year in a row.

Women, older adults, college graduates and people in clerical or professional and managerial positions are more likely to practice at least eighteen of the twenty-four preventive health habits (Table 1-2).

One of the greatest differences between Americans who do and do not practice preventive habits is their level of education. While only 17% of adults who did not finish high school practice at least three-quarters of the preventive health habits, a greater 24% of high school graduates and 33% of college graduates report the same.

Self-Reported Health Status

As in 1988, exactly one-quarter of adults in the United States report that "in general" they would describe their own health as "excellent" (Table 1-3). Just under one-third (32%) describe their health as "very good," while another 27% say "good." Twelve percent of adults report that their health is only "fair," while an additional 4% say "poor."

The practice of preventive habits and one's description of their health are directly related. A full 35% of those who practice at least three-quarters of the twenty-four preventive health habits consider themselves to be in "excellent" health, compared with 22% of those who practice at least half and 18% of those who practice less than half.

Table 1-1

TRENDS IN THE TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE HABITS (1986-1989)

	1986 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	Percentage Point Change from 1986 to 1989
Base	1250	1250	1250	1250	
	%	%	%	%	
Preventive Habits					
Those who practice more than 75%	23	23	24	25	+2
Those who practice 51% to 75%	56	57	55	54	-2
Those who practice 0% to 50%	21	20	22	21	0
Average percent practiced	64	64	64	64	0

---

*See Table S-1 for the twenty-four items used.

Table 1-2

PERCENT OF PREVENTIVE HABITS PRACTICED BY VARIOUS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

			Preventive Habits		
	Base		Those Who Practice 50% Or Less	Those Who Practice 51%-75%	Those Who Practice 76% Or More
Total	1250	%	21	54	25
Region					
East	304	%	22	52	27
South	394	%	18	60	22
Midwest	303	%	25	50	25
West	249	%	20	53	27
Urbanism					
Central city	364	%	20	53	27
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	21	53	26
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	21	57	21
Sex					
Male	595	%	25	53	22
Female	655	%	17	55	28
Race					
White	1057	%	20	53	27
Black	101	%	19	68	14
Hispanic	68	%	27	53	21
Age					
18-29 years	303	%	27	54	20
30-39 years	300	%	20	58	23
40-49 years	213	%	18	56	26
50-64 years	239	%	17	52	31
65 and over	192	%	21	50	29
Education					
Not high school graduate	176	%	28	54	17
High school graduate	438	%	22	54	24
Some college	315	%	20	57	23
Four-year college graduate	317	%	15	52	33
Household Income					
$7,500 or less	97	%	26	56	18
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	27	51	21
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	22	55	23
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	21	51	28
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	11	58	31
$50,001 and over	232	%	18	54	28
Occupation					
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	26	56	18
Clerical, sales	201	%	18	54	28
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	14	57	28

Q.1

Table 1-3

SELF-REPORTED HEALTH STATUS BY PREVENTIVE HABITS

Q.: In general, how would you describe your own health -- is it excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

		Preventive Habits		
	Total	Those Who Practice 50% Or Less	Those Who Practice 51%-75%	Those Who Practice 76% Or More
Base	1250	256	672	322
	%	%	%	%
Health Status				
Excellent	25	18	22	35
Very good	32	30	34	32
Good	27	33	28	20
Fair	12	14	12	9
Poor	4	4	4	3

CHAPTER 2: WEIGHT CONTROL

This year's Index finds that 61% of adults in the United States are overweight (Table 2-1). 34% of Americans are at least 10% over the recommended weight range for their height and frame size. Both figures represent a slight decrease since the 1988 Prevention Index, although the percentage of those who are now at least 10% over their recommended weight has risen from 30% to 34% since the Prevention series began in 1983.

Just under one-quarter (24%) of adults fall within the recommended weight range for their height and frame structure, and an additional 15% are below the recommended range.

Americans who did not finish high school are the least likely to be within the recommended weight range, as are those with lower household incomes (Table 2-2). Not surprisingly, those who consider their own health to be "fair" or "poor" are the least likely to maintain recommended weight.

Observation:

For six years now, since the inaugural Prevention Index, the percentage of overweight Americans has hovered around the 60% mark. Americans are not winning the battle of the bulge. Little progress can be seen. Either they are not hearing the message about the long-term risks of being overweight, they do not care, or they are woefully unsuccessful in being able to lose and subsequently control their weight.

Q.6, 7, 8

Table 2-1

PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT, WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WEIGHT RANGE, AND UNDERWEIGHT*

Base: Age 25 and older and classifiable

Q.: In feet and inches, what is your height without shoes on?

Q.: Please tell me your present weight without clothes.

Q.: What kind of body frame or bone structure would you say you have -- small, medium, or large?

Base	1983 Survey 995 %	1985 Survey 1061 %	1987 Survey 1008 %	1988 Survey 1031 %	1989 Survey 1015 %
Overweight					
Total	58	62	59	64	61
30% or more above range	6	8	7	8	8
20-29.9% above range	9	7	8	10	9
10-19.9% above range	15	14	17	18	17
5-9.9% above range	13	16	14	15	13
Up to 4.9% above range	16	16	13	14	13
Within Recommended Range	23	21	24	21	24
Underweight					
Total	19	17	16	15	15
Up to 4.9% below range	9	9	8	8	8
5-9.9% below range	6	4	5	5	5
10% or more below range	4	4	3	2	3

---

*Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification. Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1061 (1985), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989).

Q.6, 7, 8

Table 2-2

PERCENT OF THOSE WHO KEEP THEIR WEIGHT WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED RANGE

Base: Age 25 and Older and Classifiable

Q.: In feet and inches, what is your height without shoes on?

Q.: Please tell me your present weight without clothes.

Q.: What kind of body frame or bone structure would you say you have -- small, medium, or large?

	Base		Weight Within Recommended Range
Total	1015	%	24
Region			
East	237	%	24
South	322	%	22
Midwest	251	%	24
West	205	%	25
Urbanism			
Central city	303	%	22
Rest of metropolitan area	452	%	24
Outside metropolitan area	260	%	25
Sex			
Male	467	%	23
Female	548	%	24
Race			
White	862	%	25
Black	84	%	16**
Hispanic	51	%	21**
Age			
18-29 years	127	%	22
30-39 years	281	%	26
40-49 years	201	%	25
50-64 years	222	%	20
65 and over	184	%	24
Education			
Not high school graduate	141	%	18
High school graduate	355	%	26
Some college	239	%	24
Four-year college graduate	277	%	24

(Continued)

Q.6, 7, 8

Table 2-2 (Continued)

PERCENT OF THOSE WHO KEEP THEIR WEIGHT WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED RANGE

Base: Age 25 and Older and Classifiable

	Base		Weight Within Recommended Range
Total	1015	%	24
Household Income			
$7,500 or less	67	%	16**
$7,501-$15,000	125	%	19
$15,001-$25,000	204	%	23
$25,001-$35,000	177	%	23
$35,001-$50,000	187	%	29
$50,001 and over	185	%	25
Occupation			
Blue-collar labor, service	243	%	22
Clerical, sales	156	%	23
Professional, manager or proprietor	256	%	27
Self-Described Health Status			
Excellent	254	%	30
Very good or good	603	%	25
Fair or poor	153	%	9
Preventive Habits			
Those who practice 76% to 100%	274	%	36
Those who practice 51% to 75%	545	%	21
Those who practice 0% to 50%	196	%	15

**Caution due to small base.

CHAPTER 3: EXERCISE

Exercise and Walking

Three-quarters of Americans (76%) report that they get "regular exercise, either at work or somewhere else" (Table 3-1). Over one-third (35%) report that they "exercise strenuously" (defined as exercising so that "you breathe heavily and your heart and pulse rate are accelerated for a period lasting at least twenty minutes") at least three times a week (Table 3-2). This proportion has remained statistically unchanged since 1983.

Exactly three-quarters of adults report that "during the past month" they have done some "walking as exercise" (Table 3-3). This figure has risen dramatically since the 1988 Prevention Index, when 68% of Americans reported walking as a form of exercise. Forty-nine percent walk "daily" or "several times a week," a proportion that has remained statistically unchanged since the 1986 Prevention Index.

Just over half (51%) of those who walk for exercise report that they are walking "about the same as last year" in terms of frequency (Table 3-4). 53% in 1987 and 54% in 1986 reported the same. Twenty-eight percent say that they are walking "more often," while 21% report that they are walking "less often."

55% of Americans who walk for exercise "usually walk more than a mile" when they walk (Table 3-4). One-third walk less than a mile, and 12% walk exactly one mile.

Walking for exercise has a loyal following. Forty-two percent of adults who walk for exercise have been walking for "more than five years" (Table 3-5). Another 29% have been walking for between two and five years, while 27%

are newcomers to the sport, walking for less than two years. Two out of five (41%) Americans who walk for exercise wear "special shoes that are designed for walking" (Table 3-6). This represents an increase of 12 percentage points since the question was first asked in 1986.

Women are slightly more likely than men to walk as a form of exercise (51% of women walk several times a week or more compared with a lower 46% of men) (Table 3-7). Given the significantly lower chance of injury when walking as opposed to jogging or running, it is not surprising to see older Americans walking more frequently than younger ones (45% of adults between 18 and 29 walk several times a week or more as opposed to 58% of those over age 65). Walking is an exercise enjoyed by all socioeconomic and regional groups. There is no distinction among frequent walkers based on income, education, or area of the country in which they live.

It is heartening to see that even overweight Americans are realizing and capitalizing on the benefits of walking. Fifty-one percent of adults who are overweight walk at least several times each week as a form of exercise. This proportion is slightly higher than the 49% of those who are within their weight range and the 46% of those who are underweight who do the same.

Men, Americans living in the suburbs, younger adults, and those with the highest household incomes are much more likely to be exercise enthusiasts (Table 3-7). Forty-two percent of men, compared with a much lower 29% of women, report that they "exercise strenuously" three or more times a week. Thirty-seven percent of people in the suburbs, as opposed to 32% in urban centers, report the same. While 45% of adults between 18 and 29 years of age go through frequent and strenuous workouts, only 33% of those between 50 and 64, and 22% of those 65 and older do the same. Twenty-eight percent of those whose household incomes do not exceed $15,000 exercise strenuously three or more times a week, compared with 45% of those earning more than $50,000.

Not surprisingly, Americans who describe their health as "excellent" and those who are underweight or within their recommended weight range are much more likely to report a high level of exercise as part of their lifestyle. Forty-seven percent of adults who feel the healthiest, compared with 27% of those who describe their health as "fair" or "poor," put themselves through strenuous workouts several times each week. Forty percent of Americans who are either underweight or within their weight range, exercise frequently and vigorously. The figure drops to 32% for those who are overweight.

Q.9

Table 3-1

REGULAR EXERCISE

Q.: At the present time, do you get any regular exercise, either at work or somewhere else?

Base	1985 1256 %	1986 1250 %	1987 1250 %	1988 1250 %	1989 1250 %
Get regular exercise	77	76	79	75	76
Do not get regular exercise	23	24	21	24	24

Q.10

Table 3-2

FREQUENCY OF STRENUOUS EXERCISE

Q.: How often do you exercise strenuously -- that is, so you breathe heavily and your heart and pulse rate are accelerated for a period lasting at least twenty minutes -- never, less than 1 day a month, 1 to 3 days a month, 1 day a week, 2 days a week, 3 days a week, 4 to 5 days a week, or 6 to 7 days a week?

	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey
Base:	1254	1256	1250	1250	1250
	%	%	%	%	%
Never	24	21	24	19	24
Less than 1 day a month	6	8	6	6	6
1 to 3 days a month	9	13	10	11	11
1 day a week	13	16	14	13	12
2 days a week	12	11	11	13	10
3 days a week	13	13	15	15	15
4 to 5 days week	9 } 34	10 } 31	11 } 35	12 } 36	10 } 35
6 to 7 days a week	12	8	9	9	10

Q.27a, 27b

Table 3-3

FREQUENCY OF WALKING AS EXERCISE

Q.: During the past month, have you done any walking as exercise?

Q.: How often did you walk for exercise in the past month?

	1986 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey
Base:	1250	1250	1250	1250
	%	%	%	%
No, have not walked	31	35	32	26
Yes, have walked	69	65	68	75
Once in the past month	2	2	1	2
2 to 3 times in the past month	8	7	5	12
Weekly	9	10	10	11
Several times a week	21 } 49	22 } 47	25 } 52	25 } 49
Daily	28	25	27	24

Q.27c, 27d

Table 3-4

CHANGE IN FREQUENCY OF WALKING AND DISTANCE WALKED

Base: Those who walk for exercise

Q.: Was that more often compared to the year before, about the same as the year before, or less often compared to the year before?

Q.: When you walk for exercise, do you usually walk more than a mile or less than a mile?

	1986 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey
Base:	857	794	846	925
	%	%	%	%
Change From Year Before				
More often	29	30	32	28
About the same	54	53	46	51
Less often	16	17	20	21
Usual Distance Walked				
More than a mile	52	55	61	55
Less than a mile	33	30	27	33
Exactly one mile	14	14	11	12

Q.27e

Table 3-5

HISTORY OF WALKING AS A FORM OF EXERCISE

Base: Those who walk for exercise

Q.: How many years have you been walking for exercise?

	1987	1988	1989
Base	794	846	925
	%	%	%
Less than one year	9	11	10
1 to 2 years	18	20	17
2 to 5 years	32	25	29
More than 5 years	39	41	42
Not sure	1	3	2

Q.27f

Table 3-6

SPECIAL SHOES DESIGNED FOR WALKING

Base: Those who walk for exercise

Q.: When you walk for exercise, do you usually wear any special shoes that are designed for walking, or not?

	1986	1987	1988	1989
Base	857	794	846	925
	%	%	%	%
Wear special shoes	29	39	43	41
Do not wear special shoes	70	61	57	59

Q.27b, 10

Table 3-7

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO HAVE WALKED SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK AS EXERCISE AND THOSE WHO EXERCISE STRENUOUSLY THREE OR MORE DAYS PER WEEK

Q.: How often did you walk for exercise in the past month?

Q.: How often do you exercise strenuously -- that is, so you breathe heavily and your heart and pulse rate are accelerated for a period lasting at least twenty minutes -- never, less than 1 day a month, 1 to 3 days a month, 1 day a week, 2 days a week, 3 days a week, 4 to 5 days a week, or 6 to 7 days a week?

	Base		Walked Several Times a Week Or More	Exercise Strenuously Three Times Per Week Or More
Total	1250	%	49	35
Region				
East	304	%	48	35
South	394	%	48	35
Midwest	303	%	48	32
West	249	%	51	38
Urbanism				
Central city	364	%	48	32
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	50	36
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	47	37
Sex				
Male	595	%	46	42
Female	655	%	51	29
Race				
White	1057	%	49	36
Black	101	%	50	36
Hispanic	68	%	49	29
Age				
18-29 years	303	%	45	45
30-39 years	300	%	40	36
40-49 years	213	%	50	32
50-64 years	239	%	56	33
65 and over	192	%	58	22
Education				
Not high school graduate	176	%	46	32
High school graduate	438	%	49	33
Some college	315	%	51	36
Four-year college graduate	317	%	48	38

(Continued)

Q.27, 10

Table 3-7 (Continued)

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO HAVE WALKED SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK AS EXERCISE AND THOSE WHO EXERCISE STRENUOUSLY THREE OR MORE DAYS PER WEEK

	Base		Walked Several Times a Week Or More	Exercise Strenuously Three Times Per Week Or More
Total	1250	%	49	35
Household Income				
$7,500 or less	97	%	54	32
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	51	26
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	46	31
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	48	38
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	54	37
$50,001 and over	232	%	45	45
Occupation				
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	46	40
Clerical, sales	201	%	48	33
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	45	40
Self-Described Health Status				
Excellent	319	%	50	47
Very good or good	745	%	48	32
Fair or poor	181	%	48	27
Body Weight Index				
Underweight	214	%	46	40
Within range	292	%	49	40
Overweight	673	%	51	32

CHAPTER 4: NUTRITION

Just over one-quarter of Americans are extremely conscious of all aspects of diet and nutrition. Twenty-seven percent report that they "try a lot" in at least eight of Prevention's eleven key diet and nutrition concerns (Table 4-2). 53% "try a lot" on between three and seven areas, while one-fifth (20%) show minimal concern, trying a lot in no more than two areas.

Majorities of Americans report that they "try a lot" in regard to six specific diet and nutrition practices (Table 4-1). Sixty-one percent "try a lot to eat vegetables in the cabbage family, such as cabbage, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower," 60% do the same with regard to getting enough fiber from "whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables," 58% try to get enough vitamins and minerals either through food or supplements, 55% try to get enough calcium, and 52% make a conscious effort to avoid eating too much salt and sodium.

Showing a steady decline since The 1983 Prevention Index, Americans are making less of an effort in trying to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet foods. Forty-six percent (down from 52% in 1984) now state that they "try a lot" to avoid sugar.

Showing even less concern, 33% of Americans try to avoid caffeine in beverages, and the same proportion try to avoid foods with additives. Twenty-eight percent, compared with 34% in 1985 when the question was first included, report that they try to eat fish twice a week.

Americans are paying attention to the message on cholesterol and fat. 58% of adults in the Unites States "try a lot" to "avoid eating too much fat," a four percentage point increase over the 1987 and 1988 Indices. Moreover, 50% of Americans now report that they make the same effort in trying to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products, and fatty meats. This proportion has climbed steadily since the first Prevention Index in 1983, when the figure stood at 42%.

> Observation:
>
> While it is heartening to see Americans responding to the dangers of too much cholesterol and fat, disturbing trends in other areas are emerging. People appear to be less concerned with sugar and losing interest in eating fish. Moreover, despite the millions of dollars spent on advertising the need for fiber, the proportion of Americans who "try a lot" to eat fiber has remained unchanged since 1983.

Nutrition and Exercise

Doctors and weight-loss specialists have increasingly been advocating the combination of good diet and exercise as a two-part method to maintain or lose weight and promote general well-being. Looking at the Nutrition Index and exercise behavior patterns together, 37% of adults who exercise strenuously also score highly on the nutrition index (i.e., they practice at least eight of the eleven diet and nutrition habits) (Table 4-2). But half of those who exercise strenuously only practice between three and six habits, and 13% practice even less. The figures are worse for those who "never" exercise strenuously. Only 19% score "high" on the nutrition index, 55% fall into the middle range, and over one-quarter (27%) practice less than three of the diet and nutrition habits.

The Nutrition/Exercise Index shows that 13% of adults score highly on nutrition aspects and exercise strenuously three or more days per week (Table 4-3). Another 13% score highly with regard to nutrition only, and 22% exercise frequently and strenuously but do not score highly when it comes to their diet. Unfortunately one-half (50%) of Americans do neither.

Women are slightly more likely than men to score highly on the nutrition index and exercise strenuously and frequently, as are college graduates and those who regard their health as "excellent" (Table 4-3).

Looking at those who score highly on nutrition only or exercise strenuously only, women are more likely to be conscious of nutrition, whereas men are more likely to exercise. Older adults are more concerned with nutrition, while younger ones are putting themselves through vigorous workouts more often. People who consider their health to be "excellent" are more likely to exercise as opposed to watching their eating habits, whereas those who rate their health as "fair" or "poor" are completely opposite.

The Americans who ignore nutritional concerns and lead a more sedentary lifestyle tend to be women, less educated, overweight, and less enthusiastic about their own health status.

Q.5

Table 4-1

TRENDS IN SOME KEY ASPECTS OF DIET AND NUTRITION

Q.: Thinking about your personal diet and nutrition, do you try a lot, try a little, or don't you try at all to (READ EACH ITEM)?

	Those Who Try A Lot							Change Since 1983
	1983 Survey	1984 Survey	1985 Survey	1986 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	
Base	1254	1253	1256	1250	1250	1250	1250	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Get enough vitamins and minerals in foods or in supplements	63	57	63	63	59	57	58	-5
Eat enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables	59	58	59	59	60	60	60	+1
Avoid eating too much fat	55	59	56	56	54	54	58	+3
Avoid eating too much salt or sodium	53	54	54	57	54	48	52	-1
Avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	51	52	50	49	49	47	46	-5
Get enough calcium in food or in supplements	50	45	57	57	54	53	55	+5
Avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products, and fatty meats	42	43	42	46	42	48	50	+8
Avoid caffeine in beverages such as coffee, tea, and certain soda pop	X	34	37	34	34	33	33	-1*
Avoid foods that contain additives, such as preservatives, colorings, and artificial flavorings	X	37	33	36	36	35	33	-4*
Eat fish twice a week	X	X	34	31	33	28	28	-6**
Eat vegetables in the cabbage family, such as cabbage, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower	X	X	62	65	59	60	61	-1**

X = Not asked.
* = Change since 1984.
** = Change since 1985.

Note: Twenty-seven percent of adults "try a lot" in eight or more of the eleven areas; 53% in three to seven areas; and 20% in two or fewer of the areas.

Q.5, 10

Table 4-2

NUTRITION INDEX BY EXERCISE BEHAVIOR

Q.: Thinking about your personal diet and nutrition, do you try a lot, a little, or don't you try at all to (READ EACH ITEM).

Q.: How often do you exercise strenuously -- that is, so you breathe heavily and your heart and pulse rate are accelerated for a period lasting at least twenty minutes -- never, less than 1 day a month, 1 to 3 days a month, 1 day a week, 2 days a week, 3 days a week, 4 to 5 days a week, or 6 to 7 days a week?

	Total	Those Who Exercise Strenuously Three Times Or More Per Week	Those Who Never Exercise Strenuously
Base	1250	437	285
	%	%	%
Nutrition Index*			
High	27	37	19
Medium	53	50	55
Low	20	13	27

---

*Nutrition index is based on the total number of nutrition behavior items in question 5 which respondents say they "try a lot" to do. Those saying "try a lot" on 8, 9, 10 or 11 items are "high" on the index; those saying "try a lot" on 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 items are "medium"; those saying "try a lot" on 0, 1, or 2 items are "low". Six percent do not have a nutrition index score because they did not answer all eleven items.

Table 4-3

NUTRITION/EXERCISE INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

			Nutrition/Exercise Index*			
	Base		High on Both Nutrition and Exercise	High on Nutrition Only	High on Exercise Only	Not High on Nutrition or Exercise
Total	1250	%	13	13	22	50
Sex						
Male	595	%	11	10	30	47
Female	655	%	15	16	14	52
Age						
18-29 years	303	%	12	5	33	49
30-39 years	300	%	14	9	23	53
40-49 years	213	%	13	18	19	48
50-64 years	239	%	16	20	17	44
65 and over	192	%	11	19	12	55
Education						
Not high school graduate	176	%	12	12	20	54
High school graduate	438	%	12	14	21	51
Some college	315	%	12	15	24	47
Four-year college graduate	317	%	17	11	21	48
Occupation						
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	10	11	30	48
Clerical, sales	201	%	17	12	16	53
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	15	12	25	47
Self-Described Health Status						
Excellent	319	%	19	11	28	40
Very good or good	745	%	12	13	21	53
Fair or poor	181	%	9	17	18	54
Body Weight Index						
Underweight	214	%	15	13	24	46
Within range	292	%	14	11	26	46
Overweight	673	%	12	14	20	52

---

*Those who score "high" on the nutrition index (see Table 4-4) and exercise strenuously three times a week are "high on both"; those who score "high" on the nutrition index but do not exercise strenuously three times a week are "high on nutrition only"; those who exercise strenuously three times a week but do not score "high" on the nutrition index are "high on exercise only"; and those who do not score "high" on the nutrition index and do not exercise strenuously three times a week are "not high on nutrition or exercise."

CHAPTER 5: REGULAR MEDICAL EXAMS

Blood Pressure Reading

Eighty-four percent of adults in America report that they have their blood pressure checked at least once a year (Table 5-1). This proportion has remained statistically unchanged since the 1983 Prevention survey. There is, however, a decrease since last year in the percentage who report that they have had their blood pressure checked "more often than once a year" (54% vs. 57% in 1988). Nonetheless, this is not a sign that Americans are regarding this vital test as less important. Twenty-nine percent (up from 26% last year) now report that they have their blood pressure checked "once a year," maintaining the overall level of those who have their pressure checked at least once a year.

People in the West are least likely (78%) to have their blood pressure read at least once a year, while people in the South (perhaps reflecting the older population in this area) are the most likely to do so (87%) (Table 5-2). Women are far more likely than men to have their blood pressure checked (89% vs. 78%), as are older Americans (those 50 and older) in comparison to their younger counterparts (89% vs. 81%). Americans whose self-reported health status is "fair" or "poor" are more likely than those whose status is "excellent," "very good or good" to have their blood pressure checked annually (91% vs. 79% and 84%, respectively).

Cholesterol Testing

As seen in Chapter 4, Americans are paying more attention to cholesterol. Over one half (53%) now report having their cholesterol checked at least once a year (Table 5-1). This is four percentage points higher than only one year ago, and eight percentage points higher than the level reported in the 1987 Prevention Index. Not only are Americans attempting to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, they are also becoming increasingly committed to monitoring their cholesterol level through annual testing procedures.

Once again, women are more likely than men to have their cholesterol checked annually (57% vs. 50%). Equally, older Americans, and those whose self-reported health status is only "fair" or "poor," are more likely (70% and 64%, respectively) to have their cholesterol monitored at least every twelve months.

Dental Checkups

Three-quarters of adults in the United States report that they visit their dentist for a checkup at least once a year. This finding is four percentage points higher than that given when the Prevention series began in 1983 (Table 5-1). The frequency of dental exams has been on the rise as over half (53%) of adult Americans now report that they have a dental exam "more often than once a year," an increase of nine percentage points in the past six years.

Younger adults, those who are more educated, and those who command the highest household incomes are the most likely to have annual dental checkups. In a reverse of the blood pressure and cholesterol testing findings, Americans whose self-reported health status is "excellent" are the most likely to visit their dentist for an annual exam (85% vs. only 56% of those who regard their health as merely "fair" or "poor").

Pap Smear and Breast Self-Exam for Women

The 1989 Prevention Index finds that just over three-quarters (76%) of

American women report having a Pap smear test to detect the presence of cancerous cells at least every two years (Table 5-3). Over the course of the seven Prevention studies, this finding has remained statistically unchanged. The majority of women (55%) report having this test "once a year," while 15% have one "more often than once a year."

Women in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to have a Pap smear test at least every two years (82% vs. 71%) (Table 5-4). Younger women, women with higher household incomes, and those who report their health as "excellent" are also more likely to have a Pap smear test every two years.

Forty-four percent of American women report that they examine their breasts to detect any possible cancer "at least once a month" (Table 5-3). This is seven percentage points higher than the 37% who reported the same six years ago.

Women over the age of fifty are more likely than younger women to conduct these exams on themselves (49% vs. 41%) (Table 5-4).

Fifteen percent of women state that they "never" examine their breasts for any possible signs of cancer, while an additional 3% report that they never do the exam because their doctor does.

Q.2, 3, 4

Table 5-1

TRENDS IN MEDICAL EXAMS AND TESTS

Q.: How often do you have a blood pressure reading?

Q.: How often do you have a blood test for your cholesterol level?

Q.: How often do you go to the dentist for treatment or a checkup?

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1250 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	Change
Blood Pressure Screen						
More often than once a year	52 } 82	59 } 87	56 } 84	57 } 83	54 } 84	Since 1983
Once a year	30	28	28	26	29	+2
Every two year	6	5	6	6	5	
Every three or four years	2	3	3	1	2	
Every five years or less often	3	3	2	3	3	
Never	5	2	3	5	4	
Not sure	2	1	2	3	2	
Cholesterol Test						
More often than once a year	X	20 } 48	19 } 45	21 } 49	24 } 53	Since 1985
Once a year	X	28	26	28	29	+5
Every two year	X	7	7	6	6	
Every three or four years	X	4	4	4	3	
Every five years or less often	X	6	5	5	5	
Never	X	29	34	32	30	
Not sure	X	5	4	4	3	
Dental Exam						
More often than once a year	44 } 71	46 } 74	50 } 75	47 } 71	53 } 75	Since 1983
Once a year	27	28	25	24	22	+4
Every two year	8	7	6	8	5	
Every three or four years	4	3	4	4	3	
Every five years or less often	11	4	4	4	4	
Never	11	11	10	11	12	
Not sure	3	1	1	2	1	

X = Not asked.

Q.2, 3, 4

Table 5-2

THREE TYPES OF EXAMS OR TESTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Q.: How often do you have a blood pressure reading?

Q.: How often do you have a blood test for your cholesterol level?

Q.: How often do you go to the dentist for treatment or a checkup?

	Base		Annual Blood Pressure Reading	Annual Cholesterol Test	Annual Dental Checkup
Total	1250	%	84	53	75
Region					
East	304	%	83	54	78
South	394	%	87	56	71
Midwest	303	%	84	50	74
West	249	%	78	52	78
Urbanism					
Central city	364	%	82	55	76
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	85	55	77
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	82	49	70
Sex					
Male	595	%	78	50	74
Female	655	%	89	57	76
Race					
White	1057	%	84	53	76
Black	101	%	83	54	65
Hispanic	68	%	78	50	72
Age					
18-29 years	303	%	82	40	84
30-39 years	300	%	78	40	81
40-49 years	213	%	84	59	74
50-64 years	239	%	88	71	71
65 and over	192	%	89	69	58
Education					
Not high school graduate	176	%	81	53	48
High school graduate	438	%	86	54	77
Some college	315	%	83	49	78
Four-year college graduate	317	%	84	57	86

(Continued)

Q.2, 3, 4

Table 5-2 (Continued)

THREE TYPES OF EXAMS OR TESTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Base		Annual Blood Pressure Reading	Annual Cholesterol Test	Annual Dental Checkup
Total	1250	%	84	53	75
Household Income					
$7,500 or less	97	%	85	52	55
$7,501-$15,00	156	%	85	54	66
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	78	51	75
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	85	53	80
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	84	51	83
$50,001 and over	232	%	86	56	87
Occupation					
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	80	45	73
Clerical, sales	201	%	80	54	89
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	84	54	83
Self-Described Health Status					
Excellent	319	%	79	54	85
Very good or good	745	%	84	50	76
Fair or poor	181	%	91	64	56

Q.28, 29

Table 5-3

TRENDS IN TESTS AND SELF-EXAMS FOR WOMEN

Base: Women only

Q.: How often do you have a Pap smear test for cancer?

Q.: How often do you yourself examine your breasts to detect any possible cancer -- at least once a month, several times a year, once a year, less than once a year, or never?

	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey
Base	646	640	634	652	655
	%	%	%	%	%
Pap Smear					
More often than once a year	18 ⎫	15 ⎫	17 ⎫	15 ⎫	15 ⎫
Once a year	49 ⎬ 75	54 ⎬ 78	51 ⎬ 75	57 ⎬ 79	55 ⎬ 76
Every two year	8 ⎭	9 ⎭	7 ⎭	7 ⎭	6 ⎭
Every three years	4	3	4	3	6
Every four or five years	3	3	3	3	4
Every six years or less often	2	3	3	3	3
Never	13	12	10	9	10
Not applicable (vol.)	1	1	2	1	1
Not sure	2	1	2	2	1
Breast Self-Exam					
At least once a month	37	48	42	51	44
Several times a year	30	30	29	24	24
Once a year	9	8	9	7	9
Less than once a year	4	3	4	3	4
Never	15	9	13	12	15
I never do it -- doctor does it (vol.)	2	1	2	1	3
Not applicable (vol.)	*	-	1	*	*
Not sure	1	1	1	*	*

---

*Less than 0.5%.

Q.28, 29

Table 5-4

WOMEN'S SPECIAL TESTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Base: Women only

Q.: How often do you have a Pap smear test for cancer?

Q.: How often do you yourself examine your breasts to detect any possible cancer -- at least once a month, several times a year once a year, less than once a year, or never?

	Base		Pap Smear Every One or Two Years	Monthly Breast Self-Exam
Total Women	655	%	76	44
Region				
East	170	%	78	46
South	217	%	75	46
Midwest	144	%	72	38
West	124	%	80	44
Urbanism				
Central city	182	%	82	45
Rest of metropolitan area	310	%	75	39
Outside metropolitan area	163	%	71	53
Race				
White	544	%	76	44
Black	52	%	81**	52**
Hispanic	42	%	74**	28**
Age				
18-29 years	143	%	80	37
30-39 years	147	%	87	44
40-49 years	122	%	85	44
50-64 years	134	%	68	51
65 and over	107	%	58	47
Education				
Not high school graduate	91	%	70	46
High school graduate	254	%	76	44
Some college	164	%	81	44
Four-year college graduate	144	%	75	43
Household Income				
$7,500 or less	59	%	66	39
$7,501-$15,000	90	%	69	44
$15,001-$25,000	144	%	74	49
$25,001-$35,000	102	%	75	47
$35,001-$50,000	110	%	89	48
$50,0001 and over	93	%	83	36

(Continued)

Q.28, 29

Table 5-4 (Continued)

WOMEN'S SPECIAL TESTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Base: Women only

	Base		Pap Smear Every One or Two Years	Monthly Breast Self-Exam
Total Women	655	%	76	44
Occupation				
Blue-collar labor, service	113	%	81	49
Clerical, sales	139	%	81	37
Professional, manager, or proprietor	127	%	87	46
Self-Described Health Status				
Excellent	158	%	84	42
Very good or good	391	%	75	44
Fair or poor	104	%	67	45

**Caution due to small base.

CHAPTER 6: STRESS

Feelings of Stress

Fifteen percent of adult Americans report feeling "a great deal of stress almost every day" (Table 6-1). A further 15% state that they feel under great stress "several days a week," while another 30% report the same feelings "once or twice a week." This figure of well over half (60%) of the adult population feeling under great stress at least once a week has held constant over the past four years, suggesting that Americans do not perceive their life as getting any simpler.

Adults in the East are the most likely to report feeling under "great stress" at least several times a week (35%), while those in the Midwest and the South are the least likely (27% and 28%, respectively) (Table 6-2). Women are slightly more likely than men (32% vs. 28%) to report feeling great stress several times a week. Adults in their forties are the most likely to indicate such feelings (37%) while Americans who are 50 years of age or older (especially those over 65) are not (24% and 19%, respectively).

While 27% of blue-collar workers say they feel great stress in their lives several times a week, workers in clerical, sales, managerial and professional fields are more likely to report the same (34% of all groups).

The frequency of stress, or perhaps the vulnerability to these feelings, appears to be related to how a person feels about their health overall. While only 27% of people who report their health status as "excellent" report these feelings of great stress several times a week, the figure rises dramatically (to 45%) for those whose self-reported health status is only "fair" or "poor."

Whether or not a person smokes appears to be related to the level of stress in their lives. Forty percent of people who smoke report that they feel a great deal of stress in their lives at least several times a week. Only 27% of nonsmokers say the same.

Observation:

The 1988 Prevention Index found that educational levels, income levels, and the density of urbanism directly related to the levels of stress that were reported by Americans. The 1989 Index, however, finds that these distinctions are becoming increasingly blurred, suggesting that self-reported stress is slowly permeating all levels of society irrespective of socioeconomic status.

Steps People Take to Control Stress

Almost one-third of the adult population in the United States reports feeling a great deal of stress at least several times a week. Not surprisingly, people are aware of the need to attempt to control this. Over two-thirds (65%) of Americans report that they "consciously take steps to control or reduce the stress" in their lives (Table 6-1). An almost identical percentage (64%) report that they usually sleep seven or eight hours each day, and a solid 85% "socialize with close friends, relatives, or neighbors" at least once a week or more. The nation's sleep patterns and level of social activity have remained constant throughout the seven Prevention studies.

This year, however, there is a significant decrease in the percentage of people who are attempting to control or reduce stress in their lives. The 1988 Prevention Index found that 69% of Americans (held to be statistically constant since 1985) reported consciously attempting to control stress in their lives, whereas only 65% now report the same. The oldest Americans (those who are 65 and older) and the least educated are less likely to attempt to control stress in their lives, whereas people in professional or managerial occupations are the most likely to do so (Table 6-2).

Smokers are less likely to report that they get seven to eight hours of sleep per day (56%, compared to 66% of nonsmokers) as are less educated Americans, those with lower household incomes, and those with less prestigious occupations. Americans in their forties are the least likely to socialize at least once a week (75%), whereas the youngest adults (between 18 and 29 years of age) and the oldest (65 and over) are the most likely to report high levels of social activity (92% and 88%, respectively).

Q.15, 16, 17, 14

Table 6-1

TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF STRESS

Q.: Almost all people have some stress in their lives, but some have a great deal of stress. How often do you feel under great stress -- almost every day, several days a week, once or twice a week, less often than once a week, or never?

Q.: Do you consciously take steps to control or reduce the stress in your life, or not?

Q.: How many hours do you usually sleep each 24-hour day in total?

Q. About how often do you socialize with close friends, relatives, or neighbors?

	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey
Base	1254	1250	1250	1250	1250
	%	%	%	%	%
Frequency of Stress					
Almost every day	16	14	17	18	15
Several days a week	12	13	15	15	15
Once or twice a week	27	33	30	30	30
Less often than once a week	29	30	27	27	26
Never	16	10	10	9	12
Not sure	1	1	1	1	1
Steps to Control Stress					
Yes, take steps to control	59	69	68	69	65
No, don't take steps	38	31	30	30	34
Not sure	3	1	1	1	1
Sleep					
6 hours or less	25	26	27	28	25
7-8 hours	64	64	61	62	64
9 hours or more	10	9	11	11	11
Not sure	1	*	1	1	*
Socializing with Others					
Once a week or more	84	85	83	84	85
Less than once a week	16	15	17	16	14
Not sure	*	*	1	1	*

---

*Less than 0.5%.

Q.15, 16, 17, 14

Table 6-2

WHO TAKES STEPS TO CONTROL STRESS

Q.: Almost all people have some stress in their lives, but some have a great deal of stress. How often do your feel under great stress -- almost every day, several days a week, once or twice a week, less often than once a week, or never?

Q.: Do you consciously take steps to control or reduce the stress in your life, or not?

Q.: How many hours do you usually sleep each 24-hour day in total?

Q.: About how often do you socialize with close friends, relatives, or neighbors?

	Base		Feel Under Great Stress Several Days a Week or More	Consciously Take Steps to Control or Reduce Stress	Usually Get Seven or Eight Hours of Sleep	Socialize at Least Once a Week
Total	1250	%	30	65	64	85
Region						
East	304	%	35	70	65	83
South	394	%	28	64	63	87
Midwest	303	%	27	62	64	83
West	249	%	32	66	62	84
Urbanism						
Central City	364	%	31	65	63	84
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	32	63	64	84
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	27	68	64	86
Sex						
Male	595	%	28	64	66	83
Female	655	%	32	66	62	86
Race						
White	1057	%	31	65	67	85
Black	101	%	20	66	46	82
Hispanic	68	%	36	65	62	83
Age						
18-29 years	303	%	31	65	61	92
30-39 years	300	%	34	71	66	82
40-49 years	213	%	37	67	63	75
50-64 years	239	%	28	66	64	82
65 and over	192	%	19	54	64	88

(Continued)

Q.15, 16, 17, 14

Table 6-2 (Continued)

WHO TAKES STEPS TO CONTROL STRESS

	Base		Feel Under Great Stress Several Days a Week or More	Consciously Take Steps to Control or Reduce Stress	Usually Get Seven or Eight Hours of Sleep	Socialize at Least Once a Week
Total	1250	%	30	65	64	85
Education						
Not high school graduate	176	%	26	58	55	86
High school graduate	438	%	29	66	59	87
Some college	315	%	35	68	65	80
Four-year college graduate	317	%	30	65	74	84
Household Income						
$7,500 or less	97	%	28	62	49	91
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	34	66	59	85
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	30	67	66	83
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	30	68	66	81
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	29	69	69	85
$50,001 and over	232	%	35	63	70	85
Occupation						
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	27	64	58	82
Clerical, sales	201	%	34	69	61	85
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	34	71	75	86
Self-Described Health Status						
Excellent	319	%	27	63	67	83
Very good or good	745	%	28	66	65	86
Fair or poor	181	%	45	63	53	82
Frequency of Great Stress						
Several days a week or more	380	%	100	73	58	83
Less than several days a week	859	%	0	62	66	85

CHAPTER 7: SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

Smoking and Nonsmoking

Twenty-eight percent of adult Americans report that they smoke cigarettes, statistically unchanged since 1983, but down fifteen percentage points since 1974 (Table 7-1). Still, the incidence of smoking in the United States has remained almost constant since 1983, which indicates just how hard it is to move towards a "smoke-free society." A solid core of diehard smokers remain, irrespective of known risks of such behavior.

Whether or not the connection has been made in the eyes of the public, it is still clear from the survey that smoking and health status are directly correlated; 82% of those who report their health to be "excellent" are nonsmokers, compared with a lower 68% of those who describe their health as "fair" or "poor" (Table 7-2).

The people who are most likely to be nonsmokers are 65 or older, more educated, have higher household incomes, and work in a professional or managerial capacity.

Six percent of Americans report that although they do not smoke cigarettes, they do smoke a pipe or cigar or use chewing tobacco (Table 7-3). Combined with cigarette usage, this means that just over one-third (34%) of Americans are using some form of tobacco. Ten percent of cigarette smokers also smoke a pipe or cigar or use chewing tobacco.

Cigarette Smokers

Who are these people who ignore the warnings and evidence? They tend to be male, less educated, in a lower income bracket, and in blue-collar occupations (Table 7-4). They are certainly much more likely to be risktakers. They are not as likely to wear seat belts, they are not as supportive of mandatory seat belt laws, and they are not as strict in making their own children wear seat belts. They are more likely to have experimented with drugs at least once in their lives, to have someone in their household who smokes in bed (obviously), to drink more, and when they do drink they are more likely to do so immoderately.

They do not take care of themselves as carefully as nonsmoking adults. They have their blood pressure and cholesterol checked less frequently. They do not visit their dentist as often. They are certainly less likely to restrict their intake of salt, fat, high-cholesterol foods, sugar, caffeine, and additives. They are not as likely to eat vitamin- and calcium-enriched foods, fish, or fiber. They are less likely to have walked as a form of exercise, and even those smokers who do walk tend to walk shorter distances than their nonsmoking counterparts.

They report feeling a great deal of stress frequently much more so than nonsmokers, and they do not get as much sleep.

Q.11

Table 7-1

TRENDS IN SMOKING AND NONSMOKING

Q.: Do you smoke cigarettes now, or not?

	1974	1975	1978	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Base	1407	1556	1347	1252	1252	1256	1250	1250	1250	1250
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Smoke now	43	43	39	30	28	30	27	28	26	28
Do not smoke	57	57	61	70	72	70	72	72	74	71

Note: Because of population growth, the change in the absolute numbers of smoking adults can, of course, be less than the change in the percentage of smoking adults.

Sources are eight national surveys of adults aged 18 and older conducted by Louis Harris and Associates.

Q.11

Table 7-2

PERCENT OF THOSE RESTRICTING THEIR TOBACCO USE BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND KEY PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS

Q.: Do you smoke cigarettes now, or not?

	Base		Do Not Smoke Cigarettes
Total	1250	%	71
Region			
East	304	%	69
South	394	%	73
Midwest	303	%	71
West	249	%	73
Urbanism			
Central city	364	%	72
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	71
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	72
Sex			
Male	595	%	69
Female	655	%	74
Race			
White	1057	%	72
Black	101	%	72
Hispanic	68	%	63
Age			
18-29 years	303	%	70
30-39 years	300	%	71
40-49 years	213	%	67
50-64 years	239	%	69
65 and over	192	%	82
Education			
Not high school graduate	176	%	64
High school graduate	438	%	65
Some college	315	%	75
Four-year college graduate	317	%	82

(Continued)

Q.11

Table 7-2 (Continued)

PERCENT OF THOSE RESTRICTING THEIR TOBACCO USE BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND KEY PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS

	Base		Do Not Smoke Cigarettes
Total	1250	%	71
Household Income			
$7,500 or less	97	%	72
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	67
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	66
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	69
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	77
$50,001 and over	232	%	77
Occupation			
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	67
Clerical, sales	201	%	67
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	78
Self-Described Health Status			
Excellent	319	%	82
Very good or good	745	%	68
Fair or poor	181	%	68
Stress Control			
Take steps to control stress	809	%	72
Do not take steps	423	%	71
Feeling of Stress			
Feel stress at least several days a week	380	%	64
Feel stress less often	859	%	75

Q.11, 12

Table 7-3

TOBACCO USE

Q.: Do you smoke cigarettes now, or not?

Q.: Do you ever smoke a pipe or cigar or use chewing tobacco, or not?

	Total	Smoke Cigarettes	Do Not Smoke Cigarettes
Base	1250	339	898
	%	%	%
Smoke cigarettes	28	100	-
Use chewing tobacco	4	4	5
Smoke pipe	2	2	2
Smoke cigar	2	4	2
Use one or more of these tobacco products	34	100	9

Table 7-4

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS:
SMOKERS VS. NONSMOKERS

	1989 Survey	1989 Smokers	1989 Nonsmokers
Base:	1250	339	898
	%	%	%
Nonsmoking and Restricted Use of Alcohol			
Do not smoke cigarettes	71	-	100
Drink alcohol moderately	51	52	50
(Drink alcohol moderately or do not drink at all)	90	84	92
Exercise and Weight Control			
Get strenuous exercise three or more days a week	35	32	36
Are within the weight range recommended for their height, build, and sex*	24	23	24
(Are not overweight)	39	40	38
Diet and Nutrition			
Try a lot to get enough vitamins and minerals	58	55	59
Try a lot to eat enough fiber	60	55	62
Try a lot to avoid eating too much fat	58	52	60
Try a lot to avoid eating too much salt or sodium	52	46	54
Try a lot to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	46	43	47
Try a lot to get enough calcium	55	50	56
Try a lot to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods	50	45	51
Try a lot to avoid caffeine in beverages	33	20	38

(Continued)

---

*Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification. Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1047 (1984), 1061 (1985), 1022 (1986), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989).

Table 7-4 (Continued)

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS: SMOKERS VS. NONSMOKERS

	1989 Survey	1989 Smokers	1989 Nonsmokers
Base:	1250	339	898
	%	%	%
Control of Stress			
Feel under great stress frequently	30	40	27
Socialize with friends or relatives once a week or more	85	89	83
Get seven or eight hours sleep most nights	64	56	66
Take specific steps to control or reduce stress	65	63	66
Periodic Examinations And Tests			
Have a blood pressure reading at least once a year	84	81	85
Have a dental checkup at least once a year	75	70	77
Have a blood test for cholesterol	53	47	56
Safety Precautions			
Say that no one in their home smokes in bed	90	80	94
Say they take specific steps to avoid accidents in and around the home	80	82	79
Say they have a smoke detector in their home	85	85	85
Drivers who say they drive at or below the speed limit all the time*	49	51	48
Drivers who say they either never drive after drinking or don't drink at all*	79	75	80
Say they wear seat belts all the time when in the front seat of a car	63	55	66
Tried drugs at least once	36	46	33
Done walking as exercise in past month	75	67	77

---

*Base: Drivers only (1121).

CHAPTER 8: ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

Alcohol Use

Remaining unchanged from the Prevention Index last year, thirty-nine percent of adult Americans report that they "never consume alcoholic beverages" (Table 8-1). Fifty-one percent of adults (statistically unchanged since 1987) drink three drinks or less on days when they do drink and are thus termed "moderate drinkers." Nine percent of adults in the United States drink no less than four drinks on each day that they do drink, and are thus termed "heavier drinkers."

The proportion of nondrinkers is largest among residents of the South (where 50% "never" consume alcohol), those in rural areas (48% of whom do not drink), women (44% never drink), Americans aged 65 and older (57% do not drink), the least educated (64% of people who did not finish high school do not consume alcohol) and those in households with the lowest incomes (Table 8-2). A majority (59%) of those who describe their health as "fair" or "poor" do not drink.

As seen in previous Prevention Indices, the people who do drink and drink moderately are a completely different group. The highest proportion of moderate drinkers reside in urban areas (where 88% of people who do drink, drink moderately), are female (91% of female drinkers are moderate drinkers), are older (98% of drinkers over the age of 65 are moderate drinkers as are 90% of those aged 50 to 64, compared with a lower 74% of those between 18 and 29), and are more educated (90% of college graduates who drink are moderate drinkers compared with only 75% of drinkers who did not finish high school). Almost nine out of ten (88%) of those Americans who describe their health as "excellent" and report that they consume alcohol do so moderately.

Drug Use

An overwhelming 94% of Americans report that they "never use any recreational* drugs such as marijuana, speed, and downers" (Table 8-1). This finding has remained statistically unchanged since 1985, although it has risen slightly since the question was first asked in 1983 (when 91% reported that they never used recreational drugs).

Women are slightly more likely than men (96% vs. 92%) to report that they never use drugs, as are older Americans (88% of adults between 18 and 29 report that they never use drugs, in comparison to 98% of those aged 40 and over) (Table 8-2). Nevertheless, younger Americans are continuing to stay away from illegal drugs, a finding that first became apparent in the 1987 Index, where an increase in the percentage of younger adults abstaining from drug use had risen by ten percentage points since 1984 (Table 8-3).

Drug Experimentation

This year's Prevention Index delved a little deeper into the drug issue. It found that over one-third (36%) of Americans admit to trying "at least one drug once or twice" in their life "to see what it was like" (Table 8-4). Of these 36%, over half (53%, or 19% of the overall population) have "taken drugs a few times." Thirteen percent of people who have taken drugs a few times have taken a drug in the last month (only 2% of the adult population), and almost half (49%) of drug users in the past month have taken a drug in the last week. This represents only 1% of adults in the United States.

---

*The word "recreational" is used in the survey instrument to encourage accurate and truthful responses and in no way should be taken to represent the opinion of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

Over two out of five adults in the East and West (43% and 44%, respectively), compared with only 27% in the Midwest, reported that they had tried drugs at least once in their life (Table 8-5). Forty-four percent of people in urban areas reported the same, compared with only 30% of those in the most rural areas. Men have been more likely to experiment with drugs (42% vs. 31% of women), as have young adults. A majority (57%) of adults between 18 and 39 admit that they have tried drugs at least once in their lives. The percentage dwindles to a mere 7% of Americans 50 years of age and older.

Drug experimentation directly correlates with income and educational levels. Forty-two percent of college graduates have tried drugs at least once, whereas only 25% of people who did not finish high school report the same. Forty-two percent of people whose household incomes exceed $35,000 have tried drugs, compared with only 28% of those whose households earn less than $15,000.

Forty-four percent of adults who are underweight and 43% of those within their recommended weight range have experimented with drugs. Only 31% of overweight Americans report the same. Over one-third (37%) of adults who report that their health is "excellent" have tried drugs, compared with less than a quarter (24%) of those who rate their health as "fair" or "poor." Thirty-nine percent of people who actively try to reduce stress in their lives have experimented with drugs. Only 30% of those who do not try to reduce stress report the same.

Observation:

One of the great "untold stories" in this country is the steady decline of illegal drug use over the last several years, with the one exception of crack use in some, usually impoverished, city neighborhoods. The surveys conducted for the National Institute for Drug Addiction (NIDA) have reported decline in illegal drug use among high school seniors, college students, and adults every year since 1984.

Relationship Among Restricting Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use

Adults who report that they drink alcohol are more likely to smoke cigarettes than those who do not drink alcohol at all. Over two-thirds (69%) of adults who drink alcohol do not smoke cigarettes, but the figure rises to 77% for those who do not drink alcohol at all (Table 8-6). Similarly, only 32% of cigarette smokers do not drink alcohol, whereas 42% of nonsmokers do not drink.

Cigarette smokers who drink alcohol are also less likely to be moderate drinkers when compared to nonsmokers who also drink. Seventy-six percent of smokers who drink do so moderately, while a greater 87% of nonsmokers report the same.

Cigarette smokers are also more likely to use illegal drugs. Ninety-five percent of nonsmokers, 97% of adults who do not drink alcohol, and 92% of those who do drink report that they "never" use any illegal drugs. A smaller 89% of smokers report the same.

Q.18, 19, 26

Table 8-1

TRENDS IN USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Q.: In general, how often do you consume alcoholic beverages -- that is, beer, wine, or liquor -- never, less than 1 day a month, 1 to 3 days a month, 1 to 2 days a week, 3 to 4 days a week, 5 to 6 days a week, or daily?

Q.: On a day when you do drink alcoholic beverages, on average, how many drinks do you have? By a "drink" we mean a drink with a shot of hard liquor, a can or bottle of beer, or a glass of wine.

Q.: How often do you use any recreational drugs, such as marijuana, speed, and downers -- frequently, sometimes, only occasionally, or never?

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %
Frequency of Alcohol Consumption					
Never	34	33	36	39	39
Less than 1 day a month	16	15	13	17	16
1 to 3 days a month	16	20	19	18	16
1 to 2 days a week	19 } 65	19 } 66	21 } 64	14 } 61	18 } 60
3 to 4 days a week	7	6	5	5	5
5 to 6 days a week	2	2	1	2	2
Daily/7 days a week	6	4	5	5	5
Not sure	*	*	*	*	*
Quantity of Alcohol Consumption					
1 drink	21	22	21	21	23
2 drinks	22 } 54	23 } 55	20 } 50	21 } 50	18 } 51
3 drinks	10	10	9	8	9
4 drinks	5	4	6	4	4
5 or more drinks	6	7	8	7	5
Not sure	1	*	*	*	1
Illegal Drug Use					
Frequently	x	2	*	1	1
Sometimes	x	7	1	1	1
Only occasionally**	x	x	4	3	4
Never	x	91	94	95	94
Not sure	x	*	-	*	-

---

x = Not asked.

*Less than 0.5%.

**The "only occasionally" category was added in 1987 and 1988.

Q.18, 19, 26

Table 8-2

PERCENT OF THOSE RESTRICTING THEIR ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND KEY PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS

Q.: In general, how often do you consume alcoholic beverages -- that is, beer, wine, or liquor -- never, less than 1 day a month, 1 to 3 days a month, 1 to 2 days a week, 3 to 4 days a week, 5 to 6 days a week, or daily?

Q.: On a day when you do drink alcoholic beverages, on average, how many drinks do you have? By a "drink" we mean a drink with a shot of hard liquor, a can or bottle of beer, or a glass of wine.

Q.: How often do you use any recreational drugs, such as marijuana, speed, and downers -- frequently, sometimes, only occasionally, or never?

	Base		Do Not Drink Alcohol	Drinkers Who Drink Alcohol Moderately*	Never Use Any Illegal Drugs
Total	1250	%	39	84	94
Region					
East	304	%	31	80	93
South	394	%	50	85	94
Midwest	303	%	42	83	95
West	249	%	29	87	93
Urbanism					
Central city	364	%	35	88	93
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	38	81	94
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	48	84	94
Sex					
Male	595	%	34	77	92
Female	655	%	44	91	96
Race					
White	1057	%	36	84	94
Black	101	%	49	91	98
Hispanic	68	%	55	62	89
Age					
18-29 years	303	%	33	74	88
30-39 years	300	%	29	81	90
40-49 years	213	%	34	89	97
50-64 years	239	%	50	90	98
65 and over	192	%	57	98	99

(Continued)

Q.18, 19, 26

Table 8-2 (Continued)

PERCENT OF THOSE RESTRICTING THEIR ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND KEY PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS

	Base		Do Not Drink Alcohol	Drinkers Who Drink Alcohol Moderately*	Never Use Any Illegal Drugs
Total	1250	%	39	84	94
Education					
Not high school graduate	176	%	64	75	93
High school graduate	438	%	43	83	95
Some college	315	%	35	80	93
Four-year college graduate	317	%	24	90	93
Household Income					
$7,500 or less	97	%	52	79	95
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	53	85	96
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	44	85	91
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	33	84	94
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	31	89	94
$50,001 and over	232	%	21	81	92
Occupation					
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	35	74	94
Clerical, sales	201	%	38	88	92
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	25	87	91
Self-Described Health Status					
Excellent	319	%	31	88	95
Very good or good	745	%	37	83	93
Fair or poor	181	%	59	77	96
Stress Control					
Take steps to control stress	809	%	39	83	94
Do not take steps	423	%	41	84	95
Feeling of Stress					
Feel stress at least several days a week	380	%	34	79	92
Feel stress less often	859	%	42	86	94

---

*Based on the 60% of all adults who sometimes drink; this proportion is not necessarily constant across subgroups. "Moderate" drinking is defined here as 3 or fewer drinks on a day in which alcohol is consumed.

Q.26

Table 8-3

PERCENT OF THOSE WHO NEVER USE ILLEGAL DRUGS BY AGE (1984, 1987, 1988, 1989)

Q.: How often do you use any recreational drugs, such as marijuana, speed, and downers -- frequently, sometimes, only occasionally, or never?

	Percent Who Never Use Drugs							
	1984 Survey*		1987 Survey		1988 Survey		1989 Survey	
	Base	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base	%
Total	1253	91	1250	94	1250	95	1250	94
Age								
18-29 years	363	79	318	89	309	89	303	88
30-39 years	283	89	299	90	310	92	300	90
40-49 years	175	95	175	97	202	98	213	97
50-64 years	238	100	238	100	244	98	239	98
65 and over	190	99	211	100	171	99	192	99

---

*Question was not asked in the 1983 survey.

Q.26b

Table 8-4

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

"Have done"

Q.: Have you (READ COMPLETE LIST)?

	1989
Base	1250
	%
Experimented with drugs at least once	36
Taken drugs a few times	19
Taken a drug in the last month	2
Taken a drug in the last week	1

Q.26b-1

Table 8-5

PERCENT OF THOSE WHO HAVE TRIED A DRUG AT LEAST ONCE OR TWICE BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Q.: Have you tried at least one drug once or twice in your life to see what it was like?

	Base		Tried a Drug At Least Once or Twice
Total	1250	%	36
Region			
East	304	%	43
South	394	%	33
Midwest	303	%	27
West	249	%	44
Urbanism			
Central city	364	%	44
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	34
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	30
Sex			
Male	595	%	42
Female	655	%	31
Race			
White	1057	%	36
Black	101	%	34
Hispanic	68	%	48
Age			
18-29 years	303	%	57
30-39 years	300	%	57
40-49 years	213	%	34
50-64 years	239	%	9
65 and over	192	%	5
Education			
Not high school graduate	176	%	25
High school graduate	438	%	34
Some college	315	%	40
Four-year college graduate	317	%	42

(Continued)

Q.26b-1

Table 8-5 (Continued)

PERCENT OF THOSE WHO HAVE TRIED A DRUG AT LEAST ONCE OR TWICE BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Base		Tried a Drug At Least Once or Twice
Total	1250	%	36
Household Income			
$7,500 or less	97	%	23
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	33
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	42
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	36
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	42
$50,000 and over	232	%	43
Occupation			
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	45
Clerical, sales	201	%	42
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	46
Body Weight			
Underweight	214	%	44
Within recommended weight	292	%	43
Overwieght	673	%	31
Self-Reported Health Status			
Excellent	319	%	37
Very good or good	745	%	39
Fair or poor	181	%	24
Stress			
Actively takes steps to control stress	809	%	39
Do not take steps to control stress	423	%	30

Q.11, 18, 19, 26a

Table 8-6

RELATIONSHIP AMONG PRACTICES OF RESTRICTING ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE

Q.: Do you smoke cigarettes now, or not?

Q.: In general, how often do you consume alcoholic beverages -- that is, beer, wine, or liquor -- never, less than 1 day a month, 1 to 3 days a month, 1 to 2 days a week, 3 to 4 days a week, 5 to 6 days a week, or daily?

Q.: On a day when you do drink alcoholic beverages, on average, how many drinks do you have? By a "drink" we mean a drink with a shot of hard liquor, a can or bottle of beer, or a glass of wine.

Q.: How often do you use any recreational drugs, such as marijuana, speed, and downers -- frequently, sometimes, only occasionally, or never?

	Total	Do Not Smoke Cigarettes	Smoke Cigarettes	Do Not Drink Alcohol	Drink Alcohol
Base	1250	898	339	473	766
	%	%	%	%	%
Do not smoke cigarettes	74	100	0	77	69
Do not drink alcohol	39	42	32	100	0
Drinker who drinks alcohol moderately*	84	87	76	NA	85
Never use any recreational drugs	94	95	89	97	92

---

*Based on the 777 of all adults who sometimes drink. "Moderate" drinking is defined here as 3 or fewer drinks on a day in which alcohol is consumed.

NA = not applicable.

CHAPTER 9: HOME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Safety in the Home

Exactly eight out of ten Americans "take special steps or precautions to avoid accidents" in and around their homes (Table 9-1). This is significantly higher than the 72% who reported the same in the first Prevention Index Survey in 1983, but is statistically unchanged in the four years since the 1985 Index. The use of smoke detectors, however, continues to rise, with 85% of adults in the United States reporting that they have a smoke detector in their home. The presence of smoke detectors in the home has seen a dramatic rise since 1983 when only two-thirds of homes had smoke detectors, 1985 when just over three-quarters had smoke detectors, and even last year when 81% had smoke detectors. As in 1988, 90% of Americans report that no one in their household smokes in bed.

Four-year college graduates are the least likely to say that they take steps to avoid accidents in the home (73% vs. 80% of all adults), as are those whose households earn annual incomes of $50,000 and more (72%) (Table 9-2). Otherwise, there are no patterns that emerge as to specific groups of Americans who try to avoid accidents in the home.

Homes in the East are more likely than those in the South to have smoke detectors. While 92% of households in the East have a smoke detector, only 80% of Southern households report the same (Table 9-2). The presence of smoke detectors also appears to be linked to higher socioeconomic groups. Less than three-quarters (72%) of adults who did not finish high school report that they have smoke detectors in their homes, compared with 90% of college graduates who report the same. Only 79% of households who earn less than $7,500 annually have smoke detectors, while a much greater 92% of households earning $35,000 or more do. While the gaps among those who do and do not have smoke detectors continues to narrow ever so slightly, it is still the least privileged who are the least likely to have such a vital safety device in their home (Table 9-3).

Q.24, 25, 13

Table 9-1

TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF SAFETY AT HOME

Q.: Do you take any special steps or precautions to avoid accidents in and around your home?

Q.: Do you have a smoke detector in your home, or not?

Q.: Does anyone in your household ever smoke in bed, or not?

	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	Change Since 1983
Base	1251	1256	1250	1250	1250	1250
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Precautions at Home						
Yes, take steps	72	80	81	82	80	+8
Smoke Detector						
Have a smoke detector	67	76	82	81	85	+18
Smoking in Bed						
Yes, someone smokes in bed	11	9	8	10	10	-1

---

*Less than 0.5%.

Q.24, 25

Table 9-2

PERCENT OF THOSE TAKING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AT HOME BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Q.: Do you take any special steps or precautions to avoid accidents in and around you home?

Q.: Do you have a smoke detector in your home, or not?

	Base		Take Steps to Avoid Home Accidents	Have Smoke Detector in Home
Total	1250	%	80	85
Region				
East	304	%	80	92
South	394	%	81	80
Midwest	303	%	82	87
West	249	%	78	83
Urbanism				
Central city	364	%	81	83
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	80	87
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	79	83
Sex				
Male	595	%	78	86
Female	655	%	82	84
Race				
White	1057	%	79	87
Black	101	%	87	81
Hispanic	68	%	85	71
Age				
18-29 years	303	%	79	86
30-39 years	300	%	81	90
40-49 years	213	%	76	87
50-64 years	239	%	85	82
65 and over	192	%	79	78

(Continued)

Q.24, 25

Table 9-2 (Continued)

PERCENT OF THOSE TAKING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AT HOME BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Base		Take Steps to Avoid Home Accidents	Have Smoke Detector in Home
Total	1250	%	80	85
Education				
Not high school graduate	176	%	80	72
High school graduate	438	%	85	87
Some college	315	%	81	87
Four-year college graduate	317	%	73	90
Household Income				
$7,500 or less	97	%	82	79
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	84	82
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	82	81
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	80	86
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	81	93
$50,000 and over	232	%	72	91
Occupation				
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	81	84
Clerical, sales	201	%	82	89
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	78	90

Table 9-3

CHANGE IN USE OF SMOKE DETECTORS (1983, 1986, 1988, 1989)

	Have Smoke Detector in Home							
	1983 Survey		1986 Survey		1988 Survey		1989 Survey	
	Percent Having Detector	Gap	Percent Having Detector	Gap	Percent Having Detector	Gap	Percent Having Detector	Gap
Total Adults	67%		77%		81%		85%	
Urbanism								
Central city	67	3	77	7	80	12	83	4
Rest of metropolitan area	68		79		85		87	
Outside metropolitan area	65		72		73		83	
Race								
White	70	22	79	17	84	21	87	16
Black	48		73		72		81	
Hispanic	59		62		63		71	
Age								
18-29 years	70	12	77	11	78	11	86	12
30-39 years	72		81		87		90	
40-49 years	67		78		85		87	
50-64 years	64		76		78		82	
65 and over	60		70		76		78	
Education								
Not high school graduate	52	23	64	20	68	20	72	18
High school graduate	67		74		80		87	
Some college	75		82		84		87	
Four-year college graduate	71		84		88		90	
Household Income								
$7,500 or less	52	28	68	18	74	15	79	14
$7,501-$15,000	58		68		72		82	
$15,001-$25,000	71		75		81		81	
$25,001-$35,000	77		84		85		86	
$35,001-$50,000	80		84		87		93	
$50,001 and over	76		86		84		91	

CHAPTER 10: AUTO SAFETY

Auto Safety

The percentage of Americans who always wear seat belts when they are in the front seat of a car continues to rise. The 1983 Prevention Index found that only 19% of adults reported wearing seat belts all the time when they were in the front seat of a car (Table 10-1). The figure now stands at 63%, a three percentage point increase since last year, a six percentage point increase since 1987, and a twenty-two percentage point increase since 1985, reflecting (as the 1986 Prevention Index did) the dramatic impact of mandatory seat belt laws that were adopted by many states.

Just under two-thirds of adults (66%), up from 63% in 1988, in states with such laws obey them (Figure 10-1A). Almost half (46% compared with last year's 38%) of adults in states that do not require seat belt usage are also buckling up every time they get into the front seat of a car. The gap between seat belt usage in states with and without mandatory seat belt laws is closing. Last year's gap of twenty-five percentage points has closed to twenty points in 1989. Also encouraging is the finding that the percentage of adults in states without seat belt laws who "never" wear seat belts is declining. The 1988 Prevention Index survey reported that 29% of adults in these states reported never wearing seat belts. The 1989 figure has dropped eleven percentage points to 18%.

However, it is discouraging to note that younger adults (between 18 and 29) are the least likely to wear seat belts (55%), as are adults with the lowest levels of education and income (Table 10-2).

Given the known correlation between speeding and highway injury and mortality, seat belt usage is particularly critical when only half (49%) of the nation's drivers drive at or below the speed limit all of the time (Table 10-1). This percentage has remained statistically constant since 1985, although it has decreased since 1983.

Unfortunately, the age group least likely to wear seat belts is also the group least likely to respect speed limits. Only one-third of Americans between 18 and 29 years of age drive at or below the speed limit. The picture is not completely disheartening, however, as those with lower levels of education and income (less likely to wear seat belts) are more likely to obey the speed limits than their more educated and wealthier counterparts (this could also be the result of faster, sportier cars being owned in higher income brackets) (Table 10-2).

Over half (56%) of adults who drive report that they "never" drive after they have been drinking alcoholic beverages. Another 23% of drivers say that they do not drink. Almost one-fifth (19%) of drivers report that they "sometimes" drive after they have been drinking, and 2% say that they "always" drive after drinking.

Adults who do drink and drive tend to be men rather than women (28% vs. 14%), between 30 and 39 years of age (31%), more educated (31% of college graduates who drive, drink and drive), better-off, and in professional or managerial positions.

Q.20, 22, 23

Table 10-1

TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF AUTO SAFETY

Q.: How often do you wear a seat belt when you are in the front seat of a car -- all the time, sometimes, or never?

Q.: How often do you drive at or below the speed limit -- all the time, sometimes, or never?

Q.: If you ever drink alcoholic beverages, how often do you drive after drinking -- all the time, sometimes, never?

	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey
Base	1251	1256	1250	1250	1250
	%	%	%	%	%
Wearing Seat Belts					
All the time	19	41	57	60	63
Sometimes	26	31	27	26	26
Never	53	28	15	13	11
Not applicable (vol.)	1	*	*	1	*
Not sure	*	*	*	-	*

	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey
Base: (Drivers Only)	1097	1102	1115	1117	1121
	%	%	%	%	%
Driving at or Below Speed Limit					
All the time	56	50	50	51	49
Sometimes	38	45	45	44	46
Never	5	5	4	5	5
Not sure	*	*	-	-	1
Driving After Drinking					
All the time	5	3	2	3	2
Sometimes	25	25	23	19	19
Never	52	59	49	60	56
Don't drink (vol.)	16	12	25	18	23
Not sure	2	1	*	*	*

---

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 10-1A

SEAT BELT LAWS IN 48 STATES AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA*

Seat Belt Law by Jan. 1990	No Seat Belt Law in Effect by Jan. 1990
California	Alabama
Colorado	Arizona
Connecticut	Arkansas
Florida	Delaware
Georgia	Kentucky
Idaho	Maine
Illinois	Massachusetts**
Indiana	Mississippi
Iowa	Nebraska**
Louisiana	New Hampshire
Kansas	North Dakota**
Maryland	Oregon**
Michigan	Rhode Island
Minnesota	South Dakota
Missouri	Vermont
Montana	West Virginia
Nevada	
New Jersey	
New Mexico	
New York	
North Carolina	
Ohio	
Oklahoma	
Pennsylvania	
South Carolina	
Tennessee	
Texas	
Utah	
Virginia	
Washington	
Washington, D.C.	
Wisconsin	
Wyoming	

LAW SOURCE: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Public and Consumer Affairs, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Room 5232, Washington, D.C. 20590.

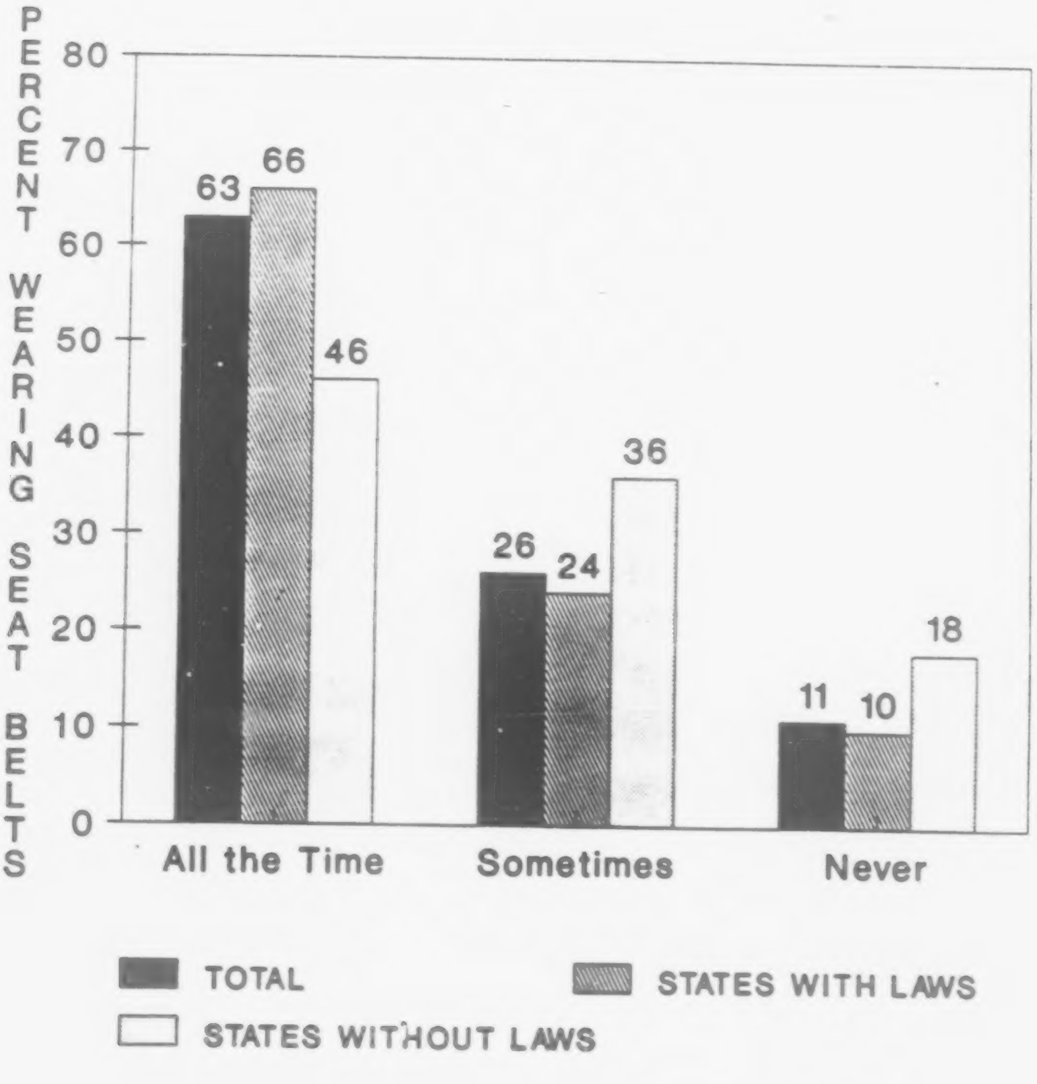
---

*Alaska and Hawaii not included in the Prevention Index survey.

**Nebraska's seat belt law, which went into effect on Sept. 6, 1985, was repealed by voter referendum in the Nov. 4, 1986 election. The Massachusetts seat belt law, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 1986, also was repealed by voter referendum in the Nov. 4, 1986 election. North Dakota's seat belt law, which was enacted April 11, 1989, was repealed by voter referendum in December 1989. Oregon's seat belt law, enacted June 26, 1987, was repealed by voter referendum in the November 1988 election.

FIGURE 10-1A

SEAT BELT USE - 1989



Q.: How often do you wear a seat belt when you are in the front seat of a car?

Q.20, 22, 23

Table 10-2

PERCENT OF THOSE TAKING AUTO SAFETY PRECAUTIONS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Q.: How often do you wear a seat belt when you are in the front seat of a car -- all the time, sometimes, or never?

Q.: How often do you drive at or below the speed limit -- all the time, sometimes, or never?

Q.: If you ever drink alcoholic beverages, how often do you drive after drinking -- all the time, sometimes, never?

	Base		Wear Seat Belt All the Time in Auto	Base: Those Who Drive		Never Exceed Speed Limit*	Never Drive After Drinking or Never Drink**
Total	1250	%	63	1121	%	49	79
Region							
East	304	%	60	257	%	45	73
South	394	%	64	351	%	53	85
Midwest	303	%	61	284	%	53	75
West	249	%	67	229	%	41	79
Urbanism							
Central City	364	%	65	314	%	51	79
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	64	526	%	48	76
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	59	281	%	49	84
Sex							
Male	595	%	58	555	%	44	72
Female	655	%	67	566	%	54	86
Race							
White	1057	%	64	963	%	49	78
Black	101	%	49	82	%	39	78
Hispanic	68	%	64	60	%	61	89
Age							
18-29 years	303	%	55	270	%	33	76
30-39 years	300	%	69	288	%	47	69
40-49 years	213	%	67	197	%	50	77
50-64 years	239	%	60	219	%	64	86
65 and over	192	%	66	145	%	62	91

(Continued)

Q.20, 22, 23

Table 10-2 (Continued)

PERCENT OF THOSE TAKING AUTO SAFETY PRECAUTIONS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Base		Wear Seat Belt All the Time in Auto	Base: Those Who Drive		Never Exceed Speed Limit*	Never Drive After Drinking or Never Drink**
Total	1250	%	63	1121	%	49	79
Education							
Not high school graduate	176	%	52	126	%	58	92
High school graduate	438	%	58	390	%	52	84
Some college	315	%	66	297	%	45	74
Four-year college graduate	317	%	74	305	%	44	69
Household Income							
$7,500 or less	97	%	51	70	%	55	88
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	51	134	%	52	84
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	62	223	%	52	80
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	63	192	%	52	78
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	74	210	%	50	77
$50,001 and over	232	%	73	221	%	35	68
Occupation							
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	54	294	%	47	78
Clerical, sales	201	%	68	185	%	51	78
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	71	289	%	41	69

---

*Drivers who drive at or below the speed limit all the time.

**Drivers who never drive after drinking, or never drink.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

The 1989 survey data in this report are based on interviews with 1,250 randomly selected adults across the country, conducted by telephone from November 6 through December 13, 1989. The overall completion rate for this survey was 59% of eligible households reached. The 41% noncompletion rate includes initial refusals, plus terminations during the course of the interview.

The 1989, 1988, 1987, 1986, 1985, 1984, and 1983 surveys followed the same procedures in every detail in order to facilitate comparisons.

Introduction

Louis Harris and Associates' telephone surveys are based on a national sample of the civilian population (18 years of age and older) of the United States. Those living in Alaska and Hawaii are not represented, nor are those in prisons, hospitals, or religious and educational institutions, unless such individuals have their own outside phone line. Samples are based on the Census Bureau's adult population figures for each state in the country. These figures are updated by intercensal estimates produced annually by the Census Bureau, and sample locations are selected biennially to reflect changes in the country's demographic and geographic profile.

National samples are stratified on two dimensions -- geographic region and metropolitan versus nonmetropolitan residence. Stratification ensures that the sample will reflect, within 1%, those living in different regions of the country and those living in SMSA's and non-SMSA's. Within each stratum, the selection of the primary sampling unit (PSU) is achieved through multistage, unclustered sampling. Each PSU yields one interview. First states, then counties, and then minor civil divisions are selected, with probability of selection proportionate to Census Bureau estimates of their respective populations.

Random-Digit Dialing

Louis Harris and Associates employs a random-digit-dialing procedure to select households within primary sampling units. Random-digit dialing is a significant improvement over previously used techniques, extending the potential coverage rate to almost 95% of the U.S. population.

Unless some method of random-digit dialing is used, telephone samples must be drawn directly from published lists. However, since the population of unlisted phone number subscribers is large and demographically dissimilar to subscribers with listed phone numbers, reliance on telephone directories alone yields seriously biased samples. For this reason, using published phone listings as the universe is inadequate for telephone surveys and inferior to using random-digit dialing.

The use of a random-digit-dialing method offers other important advantages:

-- The sample is highly representative.

-- Unlisted telephone numbers have the same probability of inclusion in the sample as listed numbers. This is particularly important in reaching both high income and minority populations.

-- Respondents are geographically dispersed, rather than clustered.

-- Households with multiple phone listings have the same probability of inclusion in the sample as households with a single phone listing.

Sample Development

Virtually all of the hundreds of national telephone surveys conducted by the Harris organization each year are based on a modified, stratified, random-digit-dialing method. In addition, Harris telephone surveys use a stratified area-probability approach rather than a single-stage sample.

There are three important advantages to using an area-probability approach:

-- It allows greater stratification of the population (Harris samples have twelve strata).

-- It allows comparisons with Census Bureau data and other published demographic information that have a geographic base.

-- It is compatible with sampling for in-person interviewing, thus providing greater versatility in study design.

The sample is developed in a multistage process. First, a listing is constructed of the latest estimates of the adult population of every state within each region in rank order, then a running cumulative total of gross sums is produced. Next, a skip factor is calculated as t/n, where t is the adult population of the stratum and n is the number of sample points needed. Then a random number, Υ, smaller than the skip factor, is selected. Beginning with the random number Υ, the sample points are then assigned according to where the numbers Υ, (Υ + t/n), (Υ + 2 t/n), (Υ + 3 t/n) . . . . (Υ + (n-1) t/n) fall on the running cumulative total of the adult population within that stratum. This same procedure is applied to each state within each region to form PSUs.

At the next stage of selection, one telephone number for each PSU is randomly selected from the updated Harris library of telephone directories. The selected numbers are then altered by dropping the last two digits (or occasionally just the last digit in rural areas) and replacing them with randomly selected two-digit numbers. As many randomly selected two-digit numbers as needed are successively appended until a working residential number is reached, or until an interview is completed in each PSU. Technically, this method of sampling produces an epsem sample of all published banks of telephone numbers, i.e., a sample with an equal probability of selection method.

Stratification of Telephone Sample

The core telephone exchanges are stratified by two variables -- geographic region and place of residence. The United States is divided into four regions, as follows:

1. East: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, and West Virginia.
2. South: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma.
3. Midwest: Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota.
4. West: Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, California, Oregon, and Washington.

We also use three categories for place of residence:

1. Central City: Every place defined by the Census Bureau as a central city of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.
2. Rest of Metropolitan Area: Every place that is not a central city but is within SMSA boundaries.
3. Outside Metropolitan Area: Every place that is not included in any of the other two categories.

We then define each place of residence category within each region as a stratum.

Control of the Sample

In order to maintain reliability and integrity in the sample, the telephone field staff follows these procedures when a respondent contact is attempted:

-- A nonanswering telephone is dialed two more times over a three-day period. At the end of this time, if no contact is made, a new telephone number is generated for that PSU.

-- If a business telephone is reached, or if contact is made with a household in which a potential respondent presents a language barrier, a new telephone number is generated for that PSU.

-- Once a residential contact is established, the interviewer uses a respondent selection procedure to designate someone in the household for the interview.

Respondent Selection

Within each household contacted for the survey, the interviewer uses a respondent selection procedure to determine which adult member of the household will be interviewed. Under the standardized procedure, the interviewer asks for one of the following household members, in order of priority: (1) youngest adult male at home; (2) next youngest adult male at home; (3) youngest adult female at home; or (4) next youngest adult female at home. This procedure results in a good distribution of respondents by sex and age. It also avoids automatically accepting as a respondent the adult in the household who routinely answers the phone.

Callback Strategy

In order to attain the highest possible response rates within reasonable cost constraints, callbacks are made according to the following guidelines:

No Answer/Not-at-Homes: An initial call and then two callbacks to reach an adult member of the household. Callbacks are made on different days and at different times of the day. After the third call, the household is replaced by another number in that PSU.

Refusals: One callback to try to convert any designated respondent who has refused or terminated an interview. If after the conversion attempt the designated respondent still declines the interview, another household is selected in that PSU.

Unavailable Respondents: An initial call and two callbacks to reach the designated member of the household. If after the third call the respondent is still not available for the interview, another household is selected in that PSU.

Busy Signals: An initial call, a follow-up fifteen minutes later, and two callbacks to reach a member of the household. Callbacks are made on different days and at different times of the day. If the telephone is still busy after the fourth call, a new number is selected in that PSU and the household is replaced.

Weighting

National public cross sections are weighted to the Census Bureau's latest population parameters on sex, race, age, and income. This adjusts these key variables, where necessary, to their actual proportions in the population. Only slight weighting is necessary in Harris samples (see Table A-1) to correct for subgroup variations in telephone penetration and nonresponse rates.

All surveys tend to underrepresent to some extent the most disadvantaged stratum of society due to the inherent difficulty of reaching it. Weighting of data by race and income serves to correct any such underrepresentation and to assure that final results are fully projectable.

Sampling Error

The results achieved from national public cross sections are subject to sampling error. Sampling error is defined as the difference between the results obtained from the sample and those that would have been obtained had the entire population been surveyed. The size of sampling error varies both with the size of the sample and with the percentage giving a particular answer. The following table sets forth the range of error in samples of different sizes at different percentages of response:

RECOMMENDED ALLOWANCE FOR SAMPLING ERROR OF PROPORTIONS (PLUS OR MINUS)

Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence Level)
To Use in Evaluating Any Individual Percentage Result

Approximate Sample Size of Any Group Asked Question on Which Survey Result Is Based	Approximate Magnitude of Results				
	Survey Percentage Result at 10% or 90%	Survey Percentage Result at 20% or 80%	Survey Percentage Result at 30% or 70%	Survey Percentage Result at 40% or 60%	Survey Percentage Result at 50%
1,250	2	2	3	3	3
1,000	2	2	3	3	3
500	3	4	4	4	4
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14

For example, if the response for a sample size of 1,000 is 30%, in 95 cases out of 100 the response in the total population would be between 27% and 33%.

Note that survey results based on subgroups of small size can be subject to large sampling error. For example, the results based on the 77 Hispanics in the sample could be subject to a sampling error of up to ±11.

The recommended allowances for sampling error were calculated based on a simple random sample.

Significance of Difference Between Proportions

The difference between the percentage responses given by two independent samples to the same question may or may not be significant. To determine whether or not such a difference is indeed significant, the size of the samples involved and the percentage giving each response must be taken into account. The following table shows the margin of error that must be allowed for different sample sizes at different percentages of response:

SAMPLING ERROR OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROPORTIONS

Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence Level)
To Use in Evaluating Differences Between Two Percentage Results

Approximate Sample Size of Two Groups Asked Question on Which Survey Results Are Based	Approximate Magnitude of Results				
	Survey Percentage Results at 10% or 90%	Survey Percentage Results at 20% or 80%	Survey Percentage Results at 30% or 70%	Survey Percentage Results at 40% or 60%	Survey Percentage Results at 50%
1,250 vs. 1,250	2	3	4	4	4
1,000	2	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	5	5	5
300	4	5	6	6	6
200	4	6	7	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14
1,000 vs. 1,000	3	4	4	4	4
500	3	4	5	5	5
300	4	5	6	6	6
200	5	6	7	7	8
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	9	11	13	14	14
500 vs. 500	4	4	6	6	6
300	4	6	7	7	7
200	6	7	8	8	8
100	7	9	10	11	11
50	9	12	13	14	15
300 vs. 300	5	6	7	8	8
200	5	7	8	9	9
100	7	9	10	11	11
50	9	12	14	15	15
200 vs. 200	6	8	9	10	10
100	7	10	11	12	12
50	9	12	14	15	15
100 vs. 100	8	11	13	14	14
50	10	14	16	17	17
50 vs. 50	12	16	18	19	20

For example, suppose one group of size 1,000 has a response of 34% "yes" for a question, and an independent group of size 300 has a response of 27% "yes" for the same question, for a difference of 7 percentage points. According to the table, this difference is subject to a potential sampling error of plus or minus 6 percentage points. Since the observed difference is greater than the potential sampling error, the observed difference is significant. Moreover, if the entire population were interviewed, the difference would be from 1 to 13 percentage points (the 7-point observed difference plus or minus the 6-point potential sampling error) in 95 cases out of 100.

The recommended allowances for significance of difference apply both to comparisons between surveys from any two years, as well as to subgroup comparisons within any one year's survey.

The recommended allowances for significance of difference were calculated based on a simple random sample.

Sampling error is only one way in which survey findings may vary from the findings that would result from interviewing every adult member of the population. Survey research is susceptible to human and mechanical errors as well, such as interviewer recording and data handling errors. However, the procedures used by the Harris firm keep errors of this kind to a minimum.

Table A-1

PROFILE OF THE 1989 ADULT SAMPLE

	Base	Unweighted Proportion in Sample %	Weighted Proportion in Sample %
Total Adults	1250	100	100
Region			
East	312	25	24
Midwest	311	25	24
South	387	31	32
West	240	19	20
Urbanism			
Central city	379	30	31
Rest of metropolitan area	572	46	45
Outside metropolitan area	299	24	24
Sex			
Male	598	48	48
Female	652	52	52
Race			
White	1059	85	80
Black	87	7	10
Hispanic	71	6	6
Age			
18-29 years	309	25	27
30-39 years	310	25	22
40-49 years	202	16	15
50-64 years	244	20	18
65 and over	171	14	16
Education			
Not high school graduate	179	14	16
High school graduate	438	35	35
Some college	309	25	24
Four-year college graduate	322	26	24
Household Income			
$7,500 or less	105	8	12
$7,501-$15,000	146	12	15
$15,001-$25,000	227	18	18
$25,001-$35,000	273	22	15
$35,001-$50,000	197	16	15
$50,001 and over	186	15	16

APPENDIX B: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES, INC.
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10111

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Questionnaire No.:__________

5-6-7-8

Study No. 892046 (Prevention VII)

November 8, 1989

Sample Point No. / / / / / / / /
10-11-12-13-14-15-16

Time Started:______________A.M./P.M.

Interviewer:______________________________ Date:______________________

Area Code:__________ (17-19) Telephone No.:______________________________ (20-26)

Hello, I'm ____________________ from Louis Harris and Associates, the national survey research firm in New York. We are conducting a survey of the American people on the subject of health and safety. May I please speak to the youngest adult (male/female/person) in the household over 18?

FROM OBSERVATION: Respondent Sex:

Male......(27(____-1
Female........____-2

1. In general, how would you describe your own health -- is it excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

Excellent.................(28(25 -1
Very good.....................32 -2
Good..........................27 -3
Fair..........................12 -4
Poor...........................4 -5
Not sure.......................1 -6
Refused........................- -7

2. How often do you have a blood pressure reading? DO NOT READ LIST

More often than once a year.(29(54 -1
Once a year.......................29 -2
Every two years....................5 -3
Every three or four years..........2 -4
Every five years or less often.....3 -5
Never..............................4 -6
Not sure...........................2 -7
Refused............................- -8

3. How often do you have a blood test for your cholesterol level? DO NOT READ LIST

More often than once a year.(30(24 -1
Once a year.......................29 -2
Every two years....................6 -3
Every three or four years..........3 -4
Every five years or less often.....5 -5
Never.............................30 -6
Not sure...........................3 -7
Refused............................- -8

4. How often do you go to the dentist for treatment or a checkup? DO NOT READ LIST

More often than once a year.(31(53 -1
Once a year.......................22 -2
Every two years....................5 -3
Every three or four years..........3 -4
Every five years or less often.....4 -5
Never.............................12 -6
Not sure...........................1 -7
Refused............................* -8

32-39Z

5. Thinking about your personal diet and nutrition, do you try a lot, try a little, or don't you try at all to (READ EACH ITEM)?

ROTATE -- START AT "X"			Try a Lot	Try a Little	Don't Try at All	Not Sure	Refused
( )	a.	Avoid eating too much salt or sodium..(40(	52 -1	29 -2	18 -3	1 -4	- -5
( )	b.	Avoid eating too much fat.............(41(	58 -1	29 -2	12 -3	1 -4	- -5
( )	c.	Eat enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables.......(42(	60 -1	30 -2	10 -3	* -4	* -5
( )	d.	Avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products, and fatty meats......................(43(	50 -1	32 -2	17 -3	1 -4	- -5
( )	e.	Get enough vitamins and minerals in foods or in supplements..............(44(	58 -1	29 -2	12 -3	1 -4	* -5
( )	f.	Avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food...........................(45(	46 -1	37 -2	16 -3	1 -4	* -5
( )	g.	Get enough calcium in foods or in supplements.........................(46(	55 -1	30 -2	14 -3	1 -4	* -5
( )	h.	Avoid caffeine in beverages, such as coffee, tea, and certain soda pop.....(47(	33 -1	28 -2	38 -3	1 -4	* -5
( )	i.	Avoid foods that contain additives, such as preservatives, colorings, and artificial flavorings................(48(	33 -1	34 -2	32 -3	1 -4	* -5
DO NOT ROTATE							
	j.	Eat fish twice a week................(49(	28 -1	34 -2	37 -3	1 -4	- -5
	k.	Eat vegetables in the cabbage family, such as cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower.............(50(	61 -1	27 -2	12 -3	1 -4	* -5

6. In feet and inches, what is your height without shoes on? ROUND TO NEXT HIGHEST INCH

4'-10" or less.......(51(1 -1
4'-11"..................... 1 -2
5'-0"...................... 4 -3
5'-1"...................... 3 -4
5'-2"...................... 7 -5
5'-3"...................... 8 -6
5'-4"...................... 9 -7
5'-5"...................... 6 -8
5'-6"...................... 8 -9
5'-7"...................... 10 -0
5'-8"................(52(7 -1
5'-9"...................... 7 -2
5'-10"..................... 7 -3
5'-11"..................... 8 -4
6'-0"...................... 6 -5
6'-1"...................... 3 -6
6'-2"...................... 3 -7
6'-3"...................... 1 -8
6'-4"...................... 1 -9
6'-5"...................... * -0
6'-6"................(53(- -1
More than 6'-6".......... * -2
Not sure................. * -3
Refused.................. * -4

7. Please tell me your present weight without clothes. WRITE IN NUMBER

/ / / / lbs. Mean = 158 lbs.
(54-56)

Not sure.....(57(1 -1
Refused.......... 1 -2

8. What kind of body frame or bone structure would you say you have -- small, medium, or large?

Small................(58(21 -1
Medium..................... 56 -2
Large...................... 22 -3
Not sure................... * -4
Refused.................... * -5

9. At the present time, do you get any regular exercise, either at work or somewhere else?

Get regular exercise...(59(76 -1
Do not get regular exercise 24 -2
Not sure................... * -3
Refused.................... * -4

10. How often do you exercise strenuously -- that is, so you breathe heavily and your heart and pulse rate are accelerated for a period lasting at least twenty minutes -- never, less than 1 day a month, 1 to 3 days a month, 1 day a week, 2 days a week, 3 days a week, 4 to 5 days a week, or 6 to 7 days a week?

Never	(60(	24	-1
Less than 1 day a month		6	-2
1 to 3 days a month		11	-3
1 day a week		12	-4
2 days a week		10	-5
3 days a week		15	-6
4 to 5 days a week		10	-7
6 to 7 days a week		10	-8
Not sure		2	-9
Refused		*	-0

11. Do you smoke cigarettes now, or not?

Smoke now	(61(	28	-1
Don't smoke now		71	-2
Not sure		1	-3
Refused		*	-4

12. Do you ever smoke a pipe or cigar or use chewing tobacco, or not?

Pipe	(62(	2	-1
Cigar		2	-2
Chewing tobacco		4	-3
None of these		91	-4
Not sure		1	-5

63-68Z

13. Does anyone in your household ever smoke in bed, or not?

Yes, someone smokes in bed	(69(	10	-1
No, no one ever smokes in bed		77	-2
No on in household smokes (vol.)		13	-3
Not sure		*	-4
Refused		-	-5

14. About how often do you socialize with close friends, relatives, or neighbors?
READ LIST IF NECESSARY

More than twice a week	(70(	47	-1
Twice a week		17	-2
Once a week		21	-3
2 to 3 times a month		7	-4
Once a month		5	-5
Less than once a month		2	-6
Never		1	-7
Not sure		*	-8
Refused		*	-9

15. Almost all people have some stress in their lives, but some have a great deal of stress. How often do you feel under great stress -- almost every day, several days a week, once or twice a week, less often than once a week, or never?

Almost every day	(71(	15	-1
Several days a week		15	-2
Once or twice a week		30	-3
Less often than once a week		26	-4
Never		12	-5
Not sure		1	-6
Refused		-	-7

16. Do you consciously take steps to control or reduce the stress in your life, or not?

Yes, take steps to control	(72(	65	-1
No, don't take steps		34	-2
Not sure		1	-3
Refused		*	-4

17. How many hours do you usually sleep each 24-hour day in total? DO NOT READ LIST

Less than 5 hours	(73(	2	-1
5 hours		5	-2
6 hours		18	-3
7 hours		29	-4
8 hours		35	-5
9 hours		6	-6
10 hours or more		5	-7
Not sure		*	-8
Refused		-	-9

18. In general, how often do you consume alcoholic beverages -- that is, beer, wine, or liquor -- never, less than 1 day a month, 1 to 3 days a month, 1 to 2 days a week, 3 to 4 days a week, 5 to 6 days a week, or daily?

Never	(74(	39	-1	(SKIP TO Q.20)
Less than 1 day a month		16	-2	(ASK Q.19)
1 to 3 days a month		16	-3	
1 to 2 days a week		18	-4	
3 to 4 days a week		5	-5	
5 to 6 days a week		2	-6	
Daily/7 days a week		5	-7	
Not sure		*	-8	
Refused		-	-9	

19. On a day when you do drink alcoholic beverages, on average, how many drinks do you have? By a "drink" we mean a drink with a shot of hard liquor, a can or bottle of beer, or a glass of wine. DO NOT READ LIST

1 drink	(75(	38	-1
2 drinks		31	-2
3 drinks		15	-3
4 drinks		6	-4
5 or more drinks		9	-5
Not sure		1	-6
Refused		*	-7

ASK EVERYONE

20. How often do you wear a seat belt when you are in the front seat of a car -- all the time, sometimes, or never?

All the time	(76(	63	-1
Sometimes		26	-2
Never		11	-3
Not applicable (vol.)		*	-4
Not sure		*	-5
Refused		-	-6

21. Do you drive a car?

Yes, drive	(77(	89	-1	(ASK Q.22)
No, do not drive		11	-2	(SKIP TO Q.24)
Refused		*	-3	

22. How often do you drive at or below the speed limit -- all the time, sometimes, or never?

All the time	(78(	49	-1
Sometimes		46	-2
Never		5	-3
Not sure		1	-4
Refused		-	-5

23. If you ever drink alcoholic beverages, how often do you drive after drinking -- all the time, sometimes, or never?

All the time	(79(	2	-1
Sometimes		19	-2
Never		56	-3
Don't drink (vol.)		23	-4
Not sure		*	-5
Refused		*	-6

ASK EVERYONE

24. Do you have a smoke detector in your home, or not?

Have a smoke detector.....2*(10(85 -1
Do not have a smoke detector.... 14 -2
Not sure....................... * -3
Refused........................ * -4

25. Do you take any special steps or precautions to avoid accidents in and around your home?

Yes, take steps............(11(80 -1
No, don't take steps........... 19 -2
Not sure....................... 1 -3
Refused........................ * -4

26a. How often do you use any recreational drugs, such as marijuana, speed, and downers -- frequently, sometimes, only occasionally, or never?

Frequently.........(12(1 -1
Sometimes.............. 1 -2
Only occasionally...... 4 -3
Never.................. 94 -4
Not sure............... - -5
Refused................ * -6

26b. Have you (READ COMPLETE LIST)?

DO NOT ROTATE	Yes	No	Not Sure	Refused
1. Tried at least one drug once or twice in your life to see what it was like...(13(	36 -1	63 -2	* -3	* -4
IF "YES," ASK ITEM 2 -- IF "NO," SKIP TO Q.27a.				
2. Taken drugs a few times...............(14(	53 -1	45 -2	- -3	2 -4
IF "YES," ASK ITEM 3 -- IF "NO," SKIP TO Q.27a.				
3. Taken a drug in the last month.........(15(	13 -1	87 -2	- -3	- -4
IF "YES," ASK ITEM 4 -- IF "NO," SKIP TO Q.27a.				
4. Taken a drug in the last week..........(16(	49 -1	51 -2	- -3	- -4

27a. During the past month, have you done any walking as exercise?

Yes, have walked.........(17(75 -1 (ASK Q.27b)

No, but ran or jogged........ 8 -2
No, have not walked.......... 18 -3
Not sure..................... * -4
Refused...................... * -5
(IF FEMALE RESPONDENT, SKIP TO Q.28. IF MALE RESPONDENT, SKIP TO Q.30a)

27b. How often did you walk for exercise in the past month? DO NOT READ LIST

Once	(18(	3	-1
2 to 3 times in month		16	-2
Weekly		14	-3
Several times a week		34	-4
Daily		32	-5
Not sure		1	-6
Refused		-	-7

27c. Was that more often compared to the year before, about the same as the year before, or less often compared to the year before?

More often	(19(	28	-1
About the same		51	-2
Less often		21	-3
Not sure		1	-4
Refused		*	-5

27d. When you walk for exercise, do you usually walk more than a mile or less than a mile?

More than a mile	(20(	55	-1
Less than a mile		33	-2
Exactly one mile (vol.)		12	-3
Not sure		*	-4
Refused		-	-5

27e. How many years have you been walking for exercise? DO NOT READ LIST

Less than one year	(21(	10	-1
1 to 2 years		17	-2
2 to 5 years		29	-3
More than 5 years		42	-4
Not sure		2	-5
Refused		*	-6

27f. When you walk for exercise, do you usually wear any special shoes that are designed for walking, or not?

Yes, wear special shoes	(22(	41	-1
No, do not wear special shoes		59	-2
Not sure		*	-3
Refused		-	-4

ASK Q.28 AND Q.29 OF WOMEN ONLY -- SKIP MEN TO Q.30a.

28. How often do you have a Pap smear test for cancer? DO NOT READ LIST

More often than once a year.(23(	15	-1
Once a year	55	-2
Every 2 years	6	-3
Every 3 years	6	-4
Every 4 or 5 years	4	-5
Every 6 years or less often	3	-6
Never	10	-7
Not applicable (vol.)	1	-8
Not sure	1	-9
Refused	1	-0

29. How often do you yourself examine your breasts to detect any possible cancer -- at least once a month, several times a year, once a year, less than once a year, or never?

At least once a month (24(	44	-1
Several times a year	24	-2
Once a year	9	-3
Less than once a year	4	-4
Never	15	-5
I never do it -- doctor does it (vol.)	3	-6
Not applicable (vol.)	*	-7
Not sure	*	-8
Refused	1	-9

25-80Z

ASK EVERYONE

F1. Are you currently employed full- or part-time outside the home?

Yes, full time	(65(	51	-1	(GO TO Q.F2)
Yes, part time		11	-2	
Self-employed (vol.)		3	-3	
No		34	-4	(SKIP TO Q.F3)
Not sure		-	-5	
Refused		*	-6	

F2. What type of work do you do?

ASK FOR JOB TITLE AND MAIN DUTIES -- DESCRIBE IN DETAIL:

Professional	(66(	19	-1
Manager, official		11	-2
Proprietor (small business)		5	-3
Clerical worker		15	-4
Sales worker		9	-5
Skilled craftsman, foreman		12	-6
Operative, unskilled laborer (except farm)		16	-7
Service worker		10	-8
Farmer, farm manager, farm laborer		2	-9
Student		*	-0
Housewife	(67(	-	-1
Military service		*	-2
Welfare		-	-3
Disabled		-	-4
Other (SPECIFY): ______		-	-5
Not sure		*	-6
Refused		*	-7

F3. How old are you? IF HESITANT, READ LIST

18 to 20	(68(	7	-1
21 to 24		8	-2
25 to 29		13	-3
30 to 34		12	-4
35 to 39		10	-5
40 to 44		9	-6
45 to 49		7	-7
50 to 54		6	-8
55 to 59		6	-9
60 to 64		7	-0
65 and over	(69(	16	-1
Refused		*	-2
Not sure		-	-3

F4. What is the last grade or level of school you completed?

No formal schooling (70(	1	-1
First through 7th grade	3	-2
8th grade	2	-3
Some high school	10	-4
High school graduate	35	-5
Some college	20	-6
Two-year college graduate	5	-7
Four-year college graduate	15	-8
Postgraduate	9	-9
Trade/technical/vocational after high school*	XXXXXX	
Refused/not sure	*	-0

*INTERVIEWER: PROBE FOR LAST LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION AND CODE INTO APPROPRIATE CATEGORY

F5. Which of the following income categories best describes your total 1988 household income? Was it (READ LIST)?

$7,500 or less (71(	12	-1
$7,501 to $15,000	15	-2
$15,001 to $25,000	18	-3
$25,001 to $35,000	15	-4
$35,001 to $50,000	16	-5
$50,001 or over	17	-6
Not sure	4	-7
Refused	3	-8

INTERVIEWER: TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME BEFORE TAXES FROM ALL SOURCES -- IF UNSURE OF 1988 INCOME, PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

F6. Are you of Hispanic descent, or not?

Yes, of Hispanic descent (72(	6	-1
No, not of Hispanic descent	92	-2
Not sure	1	-3
Refused	*	-4

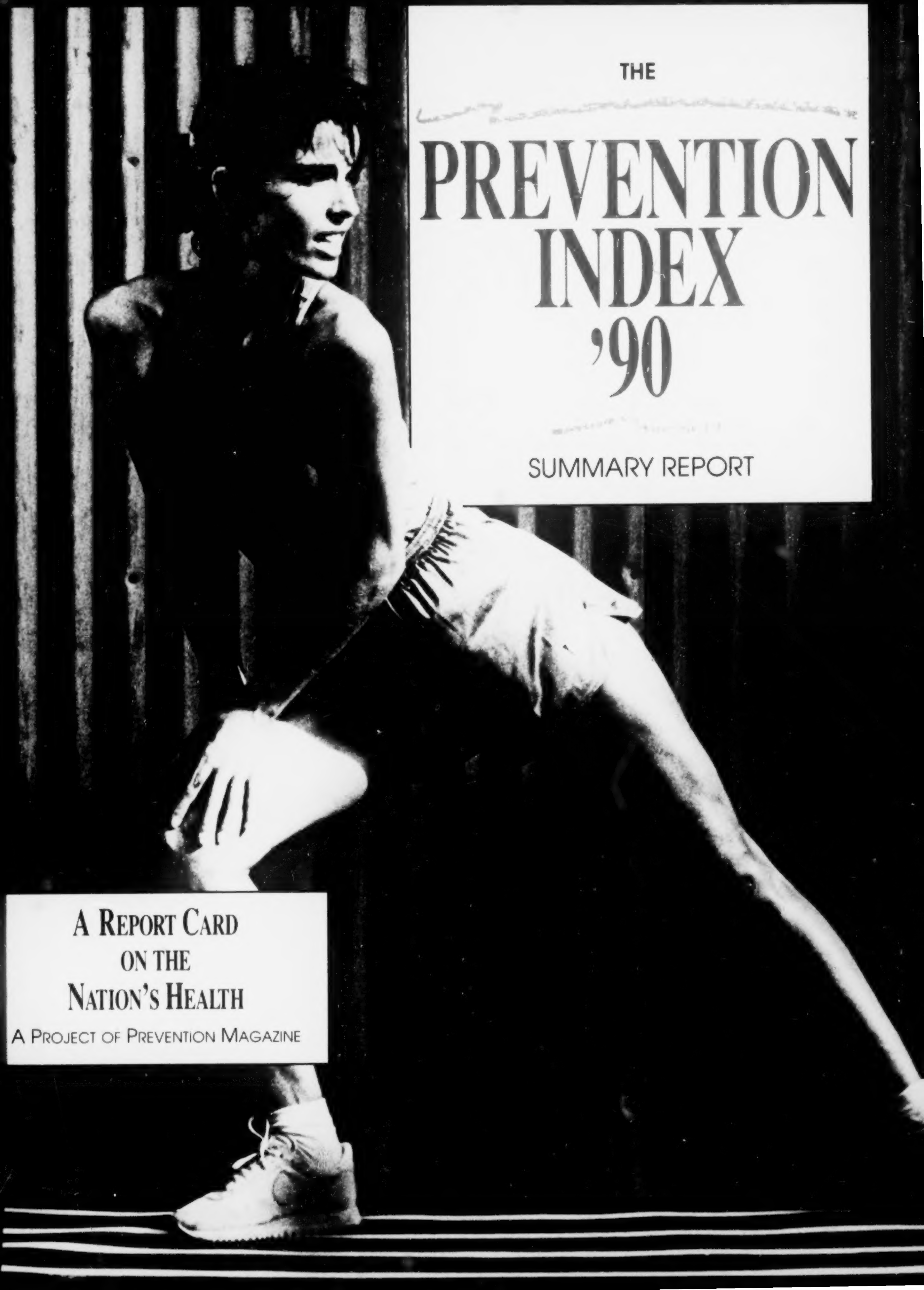
F7. Do you consider yourself white, black, Asian, or some other race?

White (73(	85	-1
Black	11	-2
Asian or Pacific Islander	1	-3
American Indian or Alaskan native	1	-4
Not sure	1	-5
Refused	*	-6

74-80Z

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

TIME ENDED:_______________AM/PM



THE PREVENTION INDEX '90

SUMMARY REPORT

A REPORT CARD ON THE NATION'S HEALTH

A PROJECT OF PREVENTION MAGAZINE

CONTENTS

PART ONE

The Prevention Index:
A Report Card on the Nation's Health

A Project of *Prevention* Magazine

Robert Rodale
Editor, *Prevention* Magazine

Sanford T. Beldon
Publisher, *Prevention* Magazine

Thomas Dybdahl
Project Director, The Prevention Index

Mark Schwartz, Ph.D.
Technical Director, The Prevention Index

PART TWO

Prevention in America 7:
Steps People Take – or Fail to Take – for Better Health, Survey Summary

Consumers' survey conducted for *Prevention* Magazine by Louis Harris & Associates, Inc. Fieldwork: November - December, 1989

Project Directors:
Humphrey Taylor
President
Louis Harris & Associates, Inc.

Robert Leitman
Senior Vice President
Louis Harris & Associates, Inc.

Phoebe A. Wilkinson
Research Associate
Louis Harris & Associates, Inc.

APPENDIX

Procedures for Computing the Prevention Index
A Note on Survey Methods
Your Personal Prevention Profile

© 1990 by Rodale Press, Inc.

PREFACE

This year marks the 7th anniversary of the Prevention Index survey.

In all but one of those years, the Index score has risen. It hasn't increased as fast as we would have liked, but in seven years we've made a lot of progress.

When it comes to health behavior, the rate of change can sometimes be frustrating. But at *Prevention* Magazine, we're committed to health promotion for the long haul. And we're optimistic about the future.

Consider what has happened with cholesterol. In 1984, 42 percent of adults said they were trying to avoid too many high-cholesterol foods. Four years later, in 1988, the percentage trying to limit their cholesterol was exactly the same.

But in the last two years, that number has jumped eight points, to 50 percent. The recent emphasis on cholesterol and its dangers has led more than 14 million people to make positive changes in their diet. And this progress is being led by people in their middle years — many of whom face the risk of early heart disease.

We expect this progress to continue into the 1990's. And our goal at *Prevention* is to continue to provide people with the knowledge and resources they need to protect and improve their health.

That's one reason we're already planning for the 8th Index survey.

Sandy Beldon

Sanford Beldon
Publisher
Prevention Magazine

PART ONE

THE PREVENTION INDEX, 1990

> *The evidence is overwhelming that a diet high in fat is a major threat to health and longevity, and it appears that the public is getting that message.*

In 1990, the Prevention Index registered its fifth increase in seven years. Our score climbed to 66.2 out of a possible 100, the highest we've recorded.

This represents a gain of .8 over the 1989 score of 65.4. And it is 4.7 points higher than our score of 61.5 in 1984, the first year of the survey.

The Index is a composite score, based on 21 major health-promoting behaviors. Each behavior is weighted for its health impact, and the total values are adjusted to a scale of 100. So an Index score of 100 would mean that everyone was doing all 21 preventive acts; zero would mean that no one was doing any of them. (For details on computing the Index, see the Appendix.)

The chart shows the 21 behaviors that comprise the Index, listed in order of decreasing importance as rated by a panel of public health experts. The first column of numbers shows the percentage of adults who practice each behavior, followed by the experts' rating on its importance for preventing disease and promoting health. The last column shows how much each behavior contributes to the Index score.

MOVING UP — AND DOWN

Of the 21 activities tracked by the Index survey, in the last year we made improvements in 12 areas. Although not all these changes were statistically significant, several are worth noting.

Gains of four percentage points were recorded in two dietary habits, limiting fat and limiting salt or sodium. The progress in fat limitation is particularly encouraging, since it comes after four years without any progress. The evidence is overwhelming that a diet high in fat — especially saturated fat — is a major threat to health and longevity, and it appears that the public is getting that message.

The number of people in the proper weight range also increased, by three percentage points. It would be nice to tie this directly to a reduction in fat consumption, but the connections are seldom that clear. If the number of people limiting their fat and cholesterol continues to increase, however, we may see substantial progress in this difficult category.

We have continued to make notable gains in seat belt use and in the prevalence of smoke detectors. These categories rank first and second, respectively, in the gains made over the seven years of the Index surveys.

In 1984, only one person in five reported always wearing a seat belt in the front seat of a car. In 1990, nearly two out of three people always buckle up. In 1984, sixty-six percent of homes had smoke detectors; now, 85 percent of homes have these safety devices.

Our 1990 report card also shows some weaknesses. The largest drop — four percentage points — came in efforts to control stress. Since the incidence of stress is not decreasing in our society, we may need a new emphasis on how to cope with this health threat.

THE PREVENTION INDEX, 1990

Health-Promoting Behavior	Adults Practicing	Experts' Rating, Scale	Value Contributed
1. Do Not Smoke	72	9.78	4.2
2. Avoid Smoking in Bed	90	9.24	5.0
3. Wear Seat Belt	63	9.16	3.5
4. Avoid Driving After Drinking	81	9.03	4.4
5. Smoke Detector in Home	85	8.53	4.4
6. Socialize Regularly	85	8.31	4.2
7. Frequent Strenuous Exercise	35	8.20	1.7
8. Drink Alcohol Moderately	91	8.15	4.5
9. Avoid Home Accidents	80	8.07	3.9
10. Limit Fat in Diet	58	7.82	2.7
11. Maintain Proper Weight	24	7.71	1.1
12. Obey Speed Limit	54	7.65	2.5
13. Annual Blood Pressure Test	84	7.62	3.8
14. Control Stress	65	7.58	3.0
15. Consume Fiber	60	7.41	2.7
16. Limit Cholesterol in Diet	50	7.15	2.2
17. Adequate Vitamins/Minerals	58	7.12	2.5
18. Annual Dental Examination	75	7.08	3.2
19. Limit Sodium in Diet	52	7.04	2.2
20. Limit Sugar in Diet	46	6.90	1.9
21. 7-8 Hours Sleep/Night	64	6.71	2.6
Prevention Index			66.2

Also, this year's survey recorded a slight increase in the number of people who say they smoke cigarettes. The change was small — two percentage points — but it suggests that we have reached a plateau in our smoking cessation efforts. Those with the greatest desire to stop smoking may have already done so, and future progress may be increasingly difficult.

Finally, the number of people who admit they exceed the speed limit has increased, from 44 to 46 percent. Although the gain is not large, it comes at the very time many states are raising the speed limit on rural portions of their interstate highways.

Understanding the Changes

What do these results tell us? One very positive message from this year's survey is that interest in health continues to increase. Advancements were made in a broad range of categories, from diet to home safety to dental examinations.

The results confirm two things we have learned from previous surveys. 1) Older people tend to have better health practices than younger people, particularly in the areas of diet/nutrition and safety. And 2) The people most likely to make positive changes are those in the middle years. They are coming to terms with their own mortality, and taking steps to improve their health.

Younger people — those under 35 — present a particular problem. Asking them to change the way they eat or exercise or behave, in order to prevent a health problem 10 or 20 or 30 years away, has proven difficult.

But the progress registered this year in limiting fat consumption offers some reason for optimism. The gains we made, though not huge, were across-the-board — men and women, all age groups, all income levels.

This suggests that when Americans focus their resources on a key health issue, the impact can be significant. If people understand a problem and what they can do about it, if help and support are widely available, many will make healthy changes. The challenge now is to maintain our positive momentum.

PREVENTION INDEX SCORES

1984	61.5
1985	63.2
1986	64.1
1987	65.2
1988	64.8
1989	65.4
1990	66.2

PART TWO

PREVENTION IN AMERICA 7:

STEPS PEOPLE TAKE – OR FAIL TO TAKE – FOR BETTER HEALTH

SUMMARY

THE INDEX SURVEY

This 7th annual nationwide survey of the American public was commissioned by *Prevention* Magazine, published by Rodale Press, as part of its ongoing project known as the Prevention Index. The Prevention Index is an annual measure of the effort Americans are making to prevent accidents and disease and to promote good health and longevity.

To discover which health and safety habits Americans are practicing, Louis Harris and Associates interviewed 1,250 randomly selected adults across the country by telephone, from November 6 through December 13, 1989. The interviews concentrated on important risk factors and habits believed to influence the long-term morbidity and mortality rates of the American people. Twenty-four key factors have been included in each of the six annual surveys.

The findings from the 1989 survey, when compared to the results of the surveys from 1983 through 1988, clearly reveal areas where the nation is progressing and areas where the nation is standing still or falling behind. With each additional year's data, this series of surveys grows in its power to illuminate a preventive health agenda for the nation.

SURVEY ACCURACY

Surveys are subject to several sources of error. The most important are:

- *Nonresponse*, if those who are interviewed differ from those who are not interviewed.
- *Random or sampling error*, which may in theory be substantial, even on very large surveys.
- *Question wording*, particularly where the survey is measuring an attitude or a future intention and not a "fact." Several equally good questions may yield different (and equally valid) responses. In addition, question sequence can influence the responses, particularly to attitude questions.

Despite these possible sources of error, the results presented in this report do reflect the most reliable information available. And the 1989 survey, along with its earlier counterparts, provides one of the most comprehensive time-series assessments of health and safety factors ever obtained from national cross sections of Americans.

A NOTE ON READING THE TABLES

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (-) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100 percent because of computer rounding, multiple answers from respondents, or the elimination of "no answers."

PUBLIC RELEASE OF SURVEY FINDINGS

All Louis Harris and Associates surveys are designed to adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Because data from the survey will be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is available.

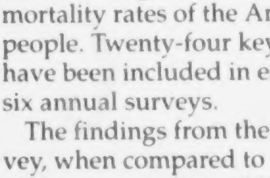
PROJECT RESPONSIBILITY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

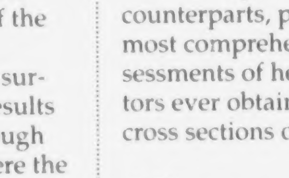
The Harris team responsible for the design and analysis of the questionnaire was Humphrey Taylor, President; Robert Leitman, Senior Vice President; and Phoebe A. Wilkinson, Research Associate.

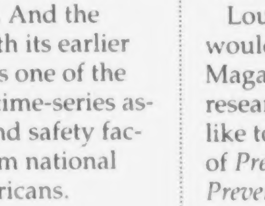
Louis Harris and Associates would like to thank *Prevention* Magazine for commissioning this research. We would in particular like to thank Robert Rodale, editor of *Prevention*, Sanford Beldon, *Prevention*'s publisher, and Tom Dybdahl, who manages the project for *Prevention*, for their continued support.

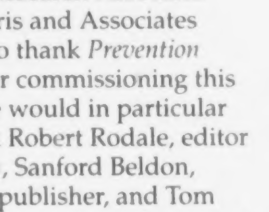
Louis Harris and Associates is responsible for final determination of the topics, question wordings, collection of the actual data, and analysis and interpretation of the report.

Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.









PART TWO

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

> ***The oldest group of Americans is still more likely than the youngest group to practice a majority of the preventive habits, although the gap is closing slowly.***

The 1990 Prevention Index is the latest measurement of America's progress in practicing preventive health habits.

Once again, the results show that the average adult American practices approximately two-thirds of the twenty-four behavior items that the series has tracked over the years. The oldest group of Americans is still more likely than the youngest group to practice a majority of the preventive habits, although the gap is closing slowly. There are many areas of improvement, as well as areas of decline, which are reported below.

AUTO SAFETY

Seat belt use continues to rise. This year 63 percent of adult Americans report that they always use seat belts when in the front seat of a car — up from 60 percent last year and from only 19 percent in 1983. At the other extreme, only 11 percent say they "never" wear a seat belt — down from 13 percent the year before and from 53 percent in 1983. There is overwhelming public support for mandatory seat belt laws. Only 18 percent of Americans oppose them, including only 27 percent in states without such laws.

The biggest improvement in seat belt use this year has come in states with no seat belt laws, but these remain well below the national average.

Driving over the legal speed limit, on the other hand, is a problem which may be getting worse. For the first time, less than half of all drivers (49%) claim that they always drive at or below the speed limit — down from 56 percent in 1983.

The proportion of drivers who admit to drinking and driving has not changed significantly this year, but it is still lower than it was in the early 1980's.

SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

If smoking is continuing to decline, the pace of change is too slow to be detected in this survey. Twenty-eight percent of all adults still smoke cigarettes, compared to 30 percent in 1983.

A further 6 percent of Americans smoke pipes, cigars, or use chewing tobacco, bringing the proportion who use some form of tobacco to just over one-third (34%).

> ***For the first time, less than half of all drivers claim that they always drive at or below the speed limit.***

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

The proportion of Americans who drink moderately or not at all (91%) was higher this year than in any of the previous six surveys. But the differences are not statistically significant, and may therefore not be real. However, this improvement is consistent with other reports of declining liquor sales.

This year's survey results are virtually identical to the two previous surveys, both of which showed a decline in drug use. An overwhelming 94 percent of Americans report that they never use any recreational drugs.

These data are consistent with the more detailed surveys conducted for the National Institute for Drug Addiction which have shown a substantial decline in drug use among adults, college students, and high school seniors since 1985.

STRESS

The proportion of Americans who report that they feel "a great deal of stress" once a week or more often (60%) has not changed significantly. One-fourth of these people experience great stress every day.

The number of people who are attempting to control stress in their lives is slightly down since last year, from 69 to 65 percent. People 65+ and those with the least education are less likely to take steps to control stress than other population groups.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Exercise

The proportion of adults who get strenuous exercise three or more days a week — 35 percent — has not changed. Seventy-six percent report that they get "regular exercise" either at work or somewhere else.

More people are walking for exercise. Seventy-five percent (up from 68% last year) say they walk for exercise and almost half of all Americans (49%) walk for exercise several times each week.

Nutrition

Over the past two years the public has become *more* conscious of the need to avoid high-cholesterol foods (up 8 percentage points) and fatty foods (up 4 percentage points), and of the need to get enough calcium (up 1 percentage point).

However, there has been a decline in efforts to "get enough vitamins and minerals," and to avoid sugar-rich and sweet foods (both down 5 percentage points since 1983).

There has been no change in the percentage who try to eat enough fiber, but interest in eating fish regularly has declined (down 5 percentage points since 1987).

Seventy-five percent of American adults say they walk for exercise, and nearly half of all adults walk several times each week.

Weight Control

There is no evidence that Americans are winning the "battle of the bulge." The proportion of adults who are overweight remains stuck at close to 60 percent, while 34 percent weigh at least 10 percent more than their recommended weight.

About 15 percent of adults are below the weight range for their weight and frame structure.

Over the past two years, the public has become more conscious of the need to avoid high-cholesterol foods and fatty foods.

Home Safety Precautions

Americans are more conscious of the need to take special steps to avoid accidents in and around their homes than they were seven years ago, although there is no change from the 1988 survey.

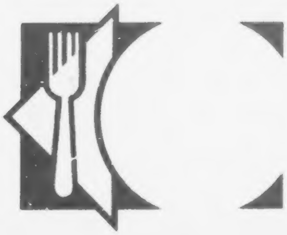
The proportion of people living in homes with smoke detectors has continued to rise. Eighty-five percent report having smoke detectors, compared to 67 percent in 1983.

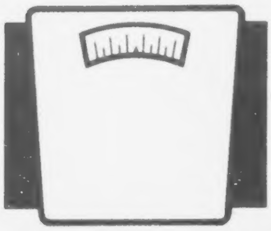
The proportion of those who smoke in bed remains unchanged at 10 percent. Smoking in bed is the major cause of domestic fires.

Regular Medical Tests

The proportion of people who say they have their cholesterol level measured once a year or more often has increased again this year, to 53 percent. This may be related to the increased number of people who report they are trying not to eat too much fat and cholesterol.

The percentage of adults who have an annual dental exam (75%) is the same as it was in 1987. But the number who have more than one such exam a year has increased to its highest level yet — 53 percent.





SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS

(1983 - 1989)

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	Percentage Point Change From 1983 to 1989	Percentage Point Change From 1988 to 1989
Nonsmoking and Restricted Use of Alcohol							
Do not smoke cigarettes	70	70	72	74	72	+2	-2
Drink alcohol moderately	54	55	50	50	51	-3	+1
(Drink moderately or do not drink at all)	89	88	86	90	91	+2	+1
Exercise and Weight Control							
Get strenuous exercise three or more days a week	34	31	35	36	35	+1	-1
Are within the weight range recommended for their height, build, and sex*	23	21	24	21	24	+1	+3
(Are not overweight)	42	38	40	36	39	-3	+3
Diet and Nutrition							
Try a lot to get enough vitamins and minerals	63	63	59	57	58	-5	+1
Try a lot to eat enough fiber	59	59	60	60	60	+1	0
Try a lot to avoid eating too much fat	53	56	54	54	58	+5	+4
Try a lot to avoid eating too much salt or sodium	53	54	54	48	52	-1	+4
Try a lot to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	51	50	49	47	46	-5	-1
Try a lot to get enough calcium	50	57	54	53	55	+5	+2
Try a lot to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods	42	42	42	48	50	+8	+2
Control of Stress							
Socialize with friends or relatives once a week or more	84	85	83	84	85	+1	+1
Get seven or eight hours sleep most nights	64	64	61	62	64	0	+2
Take specific steps to control or reduce stress	59	69	68	69	65	+6	-4
Periodic Examinations and Tests							
Have a blood pressure reading at least once a year	82	87	84	83	84	+2	+1
Have a dental checkup at least once a year	71	74	75	71	75	+4	+4
Women who have a Pap smear test every one or two years	75	78	75	79	76	+1	-3
Women who examine their breasts at least once each month for signs of cancer	37	48	42	51	44	+7	-7
Safety Precautions							
Say that no one in their home smokes in bed	88	91	92	90	90	+2	0
Say they take specific steps to avoid accidents in and around the home	72	80	81	82	80	+8	-2
Say they have a smoke detector in their home	67	76	82	81	85	+18	+4
Drivers who say they drive at or below the speed limit all the time	56	50	50	51	49	-7	-2
Drivers who say they either never drive after drinking or don't drink at all	68	71	74	78	79	+11	+1
Say they wear seat belts all the time when in the front seat of a car	19	41	57	60	63	+44	+3

**Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification. Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1061 (1985), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989).*

SECTION ONE

GOOD HEALTH HABITS

> ***One of the greatest differences between Americans who do and do not practice preventive habits is their level of education.***

While there have been changes in the preventive health habits that are practiced by adults in the United States, the overall picture in the past seven years has remained relatively constant.

The 1990 Prevention Index finds that 25 percent of Americans are practicing at least three-quarters of the preventive habits studied.* This is slightly greater than the 23 percent who reported doing so in 1986. Over half (54%) practice at least 50 percent but not more than three-quarters of the preventive habits, and 21 percent practice up to half. The average percentage of health habits practiced by all adult Americans remains at 64 percent for the fourth year in a row.

Women, older adults, college graduates and people in clerical or professional and managerial positions are more likely to practice at least eighteen of the twenty-four preventive health habits (Table 1-1).

One of the greatest differences between Americans who do and do not practice preventive habits is their level of education. While only 17 percent of adults who did not finish high school practice at least three-quarters of the preventive health habits, 24 percent of high school graduates and 33 percent of college graduates report doing so.

Self-Reported Health Status

Exactly one-quarter of adults in the United States report that "in general" they would describe their own health as "excellent." Just under one-third (32%) describe their health as "very good," while another 27 percent say "good."

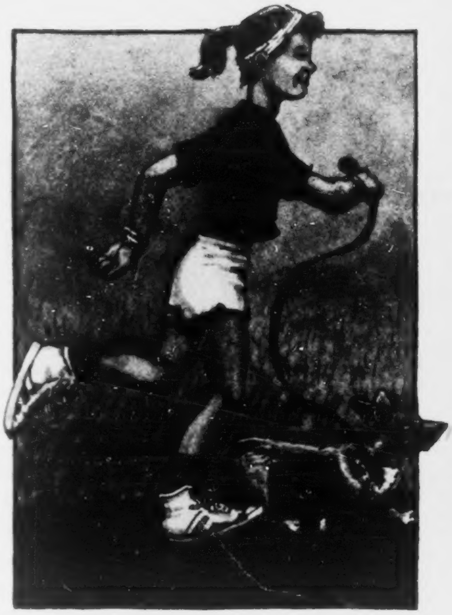
---

* *See p. 9 for the twenty-four items used.*

TABLE 1-1

PERCENT OF 24 KEY PREVENTIVE HABITS PRACTICED BY VARIOUS GROUPS

			Preventive Habits		
	Base		Those Who Practice 50% Or Less	Those Who Practice 51% - 75%	Those Who Practice 76% Or More
Total	1250	%	21	54	25
Region					
East	304	%	22	52	27
South	394	%	18	60	22
Midwest	303	%	25	50	25
West	249	%	20	53	27
Urbanism					
Central City	364	%	20	53	27
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	21	53	26
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	21	57	21
Sex					
Male	595	%	25	53	22
Female	655	%	17	55	28
Race					
White	1057	%	20	53	27
Black	101	%	19	68	14
Hispanic	68	%	27	53	21
Age					
18-29 years	303	%	27	54	20
30-39 years	300	%	20	58	23
40-49 years	213	%	18	56	26
50-64 years	239	%	17	52	31
65 and over	192	%	21	50	29
Education					
Not high school graduate	176	%	28	54	17
High school graduate	438	%	22	54	24
Some college	315	%	20	57	23
Four-year college graduate	317	%	15	52	33
Household Income					
$7,500 or less	97	%	26	56	18
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	27	51	21
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	22	55	23
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	21	51	28
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	11	58	31
$50,001 and over	232	%	18	54	28
Occupation					
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	26	56	18
Clerical, sales	201	%	18	54	28
Professional, manager or proprietor	298	%	14	57	28



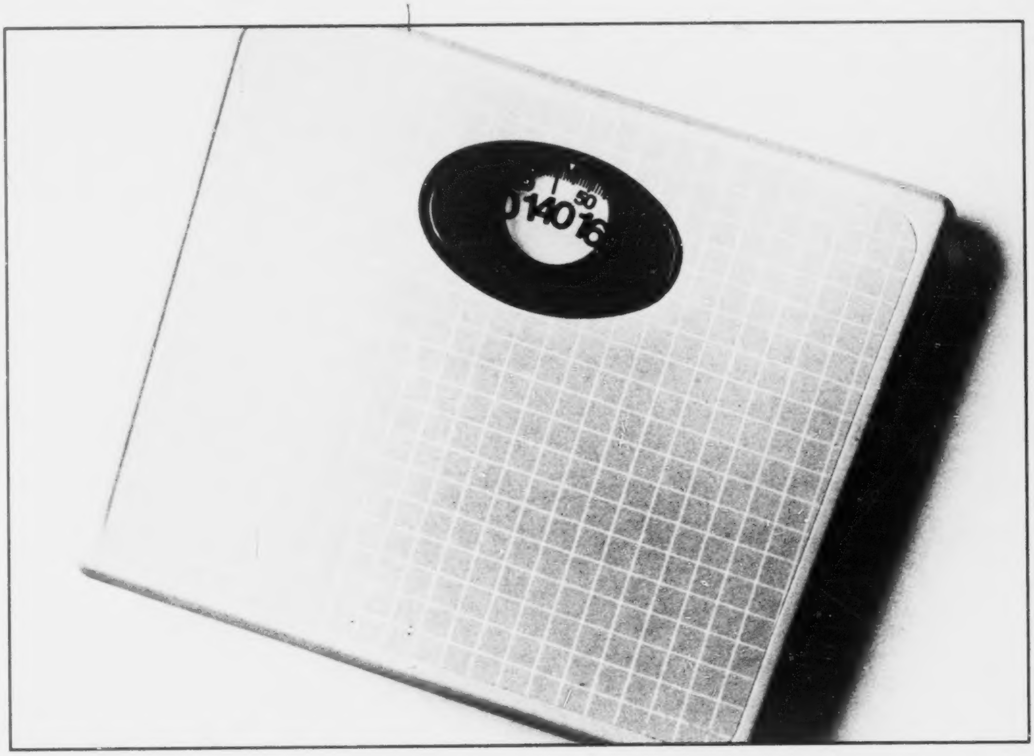
Twelve percent of adults report that their health is only "fair," while an additional 4 percent say "poor."

The practice of preventive habits and one's description of his or her health are directly related. A full 35 percent of those who practice at least three-quarters of the twenty-four preventive health habits consider themselves to be in "excellent" health, compared with 22 percent of those who practice at least half and 18 percent of those who practice fewer than half.

SECTION 2

WEIGHT CONTROL

Americans are woefully unsuccessful in being able to control their weight.



Sixty-one percent of adults in the United States are overweight (Table 2-1). More than half of these people are at least 10 percent over the recommended weight range for their height and frame size. Both figures represent a slight decrease from the 1988 survey, although the percentage of those who are now at least 10 percent over their recommended weight has risen from 30 percent in 1983 to 34 percent in 1989.

Just under one-quarter (24%) of adults fall within the recommended weight range for their height and frame structure, and an additional 15 percent are below the recommended range.

Americans who did not finish high school are the least likely to be within the recommended weight range, as are those with lower household incomes (Table 2-2). Not surprisingly, those who consider their own health to be "fair" or "poor" are the least likely to maintain recommended weight.

Since the inaugural Prevention Index survey in 1983, the number of overweight Americans has hovered around the 60 percent mark. Little progress can be seen. As a nation, we do not seem to be hearing the message about the long-term risks of being overweight, or we do not care, or we are woefully unsuccessful in being able to control our weight.

TABLE 2-1

TRENDS IN WEIGHT CONTROL

Base: Age 25 and older and classifiable

Base	**1983 Survey 995 %**	**1985 Survey 1061 %**	**1987 Survey 1008 %**	**1988 Survey 1031 %**	**1989 Survey 1015 %**
Overweight					
Total	58	62	59	64	61
30% or more above range	6	8	7	8	8
20-29.9% above range	9	7	8	10	9
10-19.9% above range	15	14	17	18	17
5-9.9% above range	13	16	14	15	13
Up to 4.9% above range	16	16	13	14	13
Within Recommended Range	23	21	24	21	24
Underweight					
Total	19	17	16	15	15
Up to 4.9% below range	9	9	8	8	8
5-9.9% below range	6	4	5	5	5
10% or more below range	4	4	3	2	3

**Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification. Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1061 (1985), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989).*

TABLE 2-2

PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO KEEP THEIR WEIGHT WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED RANGE

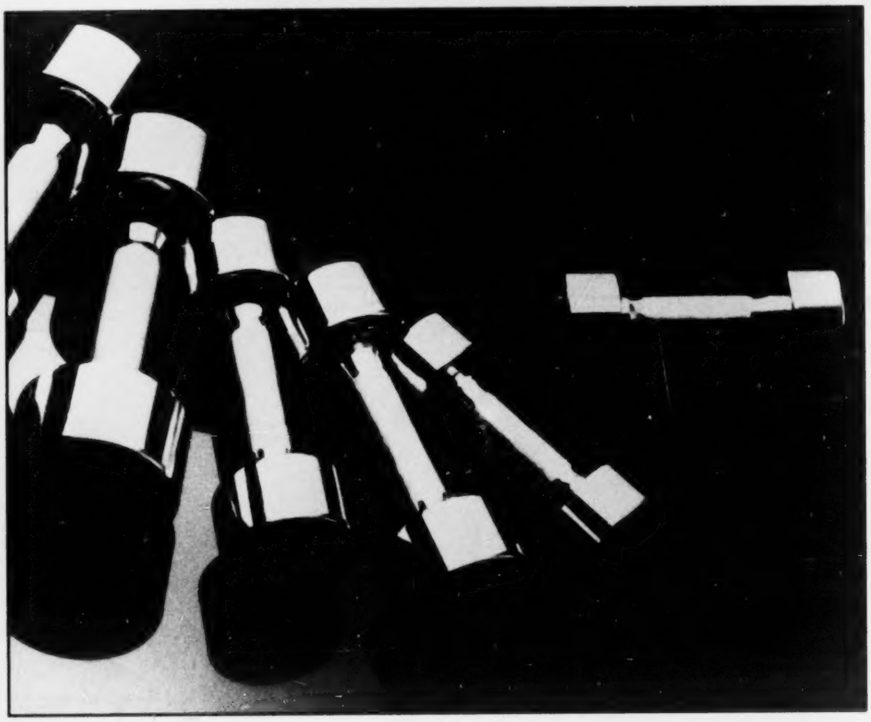
Base: Age 25 and older and classifiable

	Base		Weight Within Recommended Range
Total	1015	%	24
Region			
East	237	%	24
South	322	%	22
Midwest	251	%	24
West	205	%	25
Urbanism			
Central City	303	%	22
Rest of metropolitan area	452	%	24
Outside metropolitan area	260	%	25
Sex			
Male	467	%	23
Female	548	%	24
Race			
White	862	%	25
Black	84	%	16**
Hispanic	51	%	21**
Age			
18-29 years	127	%	22
30-39 years	281	%	26
40-49 years	201	%	25
50-64 years	222	%	20
65 and over	184	%	24
Education			
Not high school graduate	141	%	18
High school graduate	355	%	26
Some college	239	%	24
Four-year college graduate	277	%	24
Household Income			
$7,500 or less	67	%	16**
$7,501-$15,000	125	%	19
$15,001-$25,000	204	%	23
$25,001-$35,000	177	%	23
$35,001-$50,000	187	%	29
$50,001 and over	185	%	25
Occupation			
Blue-collar labor, service	243	%	22
Clerical, sales	156	%	23
Professional, manager or proprietor	256	%	27
Self-Described Health Status			
Excellent	254	%	30
Very good or good	603	%	25
Fair or poor	153	%	9
Preventive Habits			
Those who practice 76% to 100%	274	%	36
Those who practice 51% to 75%	545	%	21
Those who practice 0% to 50%	196	%	15

***Caution due to small base*

EXERCISE

Forty-two percent of men, compared with a much lower 29 percent of women, say that they exercise strenuously three or more times per week.



Three-quarters of Americans (76%) report that they get "regular exercise," either at work or somewhere else. But only one-third (35%) report that they "exercise strenuously," which is defined as exercising so that "you breathe heavily and your heart and pulse rate are accelerated for a period lasting at least twenty minutes," at least three times a week (Table 3-1). This proportion has remained statistically unchanged since 1983.

Men, Americans living in the suburbs, younger adults, and those with the highest household incomes are much more likely to be exercise enthusiasts (Table 3-2). Forty-two percent of men, compared with a much lower 29 percent of women, report that they "exercise strenuously" three or more times a week. Thirty-six percent of people in the suburbs, as opposed to 32 percent in urban centers, report the same.

Of adults between 18 and 29 years of age, 45 percent go through frequent and strenuous workouts. But only 33 percent of those between 50 and 64, and 22 percent of those 65 and older do the same. Twenty-eight percent of those whose household incomes do not exceed $15,000 exercise strenuously three or more times a week, compared with 45 percent of those earning more than $50,000.

Not surprisingly, Americans who describe their health as "excellent" and those who are underweight or within their recommended weight range are much more likely to report a high level of exercise as part of their lifestyle.

WALKING FOR EXERCISE

Exactly three-quarters of adults report that during the past month they have done some "walking as exercise." This figure has risen dramatically since the previous Prevention Index, when 68 percent of Americans reported walking as a form of exercise. Forty-nine percent walk "daily" or "several times a week," a proportion that has remained statistically unchanged since 1986.

Just over half (51%) of those who walk for exercise report that they are walking "about the same as last year" in terms of frequency. Twenty-eight percent say that they are walking "more often," while 21 percent report that they are walking "less often."

TABLE 3-1

FREQUENCY OF STRENUOUS EXERCISE

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %
Never	24	21	24	19	24
Less than 1 day a month	6	8	6	6	6
1 to 3 days a month	9	13	10	11	11
1 day a week	13	16	14	13	12
2 days a week	12	11	11	13	10
3 days a week	13	13	15	15	15
4 to 5 days a week	9 } 34	10 } 31	11 } 35	12 } 36	10 } 35
6 to 7 days a week	12	8	9	9	10

TABLE 3-2

THOSE WHO HAVE WALKED SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK AS EXERCISE AND THOSE WHO EXERCISE STRENUOUSLY THREE OR MORE DAYS PER WEEK

	Base		Walked Several Times a Week Or More	Exercise Strenuously Three Times Per Week Or More
Total	1250	%	49	35
Region				
East	304	%	48	35
South	394	%	48	35
Midwest	303	%	48	32
West	249	%	51	38
Urbanism				
Central City	364	%	48	32
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	50	36
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	47	37
Sex				
Male	595	%	46	42
Female	655	%	51	29
Race				
White	1057	%	49	36
Black	101	%	50	36
Hispanic	68	%	49	29
Age				
18-29 years	303	%	45	45
30-39 years	300	%	40	36
40-49 years	213	%	50	32
50-64 years	239	%	56	33
65 and over	192	%	58	22
Education				
Not high school graduate	176	%	46	32
High school graduate	438	%	49	33
Some college	315	%	51	36
Four-year college graduate	317	%	48	38
Household Income				
$7,500 or less	97	%	54	32
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	51	26
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	46	31
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	48	38
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	54	37
$50,001 and over	232	%	45	45
Occupation				
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	46	40
Clerical, sales	201	%	48	33
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	45	40
Self-Described Health Status				
Excellent	319	%	50	47
Very good or good	745	%	48	32
Fair or poor	181	%	48	27
Body Weight Index				
Underweight	214	%	46	40
Within range	292	%	49	40
Overweight	673	%	51	32

Walking for exercise has a loyal following. Forty-two percent of adults who walk for exercise have been walking for "more than five years." Another 29 percent have been walking for between two and five years, while 27 percent are newcomers to the sport, walking for less than two years. Two out of five Americans (41%) who walk for exercise wear "special shoes that are designed for walking." This represents an increase of 12 percentage points since the question was first asked in 1986.

Women are slightly more likely than men to walk for exercise. And given the significantly lower chance of injury when walking as opposed to jogging or running, it is not surprising to see older Americans walking more frequently than younger ones. Forty-five percent of adults between 18 and 29 walk several times a week or more, as opposed to 58 percent of those over age 65.

Even overweight Americans are realizing the benefits of walking. Fifty-one percent of adults who are overweight walk at least several times each week as a form of exercise. This proportion is slightly higher than the 49 percent of those who are within their weight range and the 46 percent of those who are underweight who do the same.

SECTION FOUR

NUTRITION

Americans are paying attention to information about the dangers of too much cholesterol and fat.

About one-quarter of Americans are extremely conscious of all aspects of diet and nutrition. Twenty-seven percent report that they "try a lot" in at least eight of eleven key diet and nutrition concerns. Fifty-three percent try a lot on between three and seven areas, while one-fifth show minimal concern, trying a lot in no more than two areas.

Majorities of Americans report that they try a lot in regard to six specific diet and nutrition practices. Sixty-one percent try a lot to eat vegetables in the cabbage family, such as cabbage, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower, 60 percent do the same with regard to getting enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables, 58 percent try to get enough vitamins and minerals either through food or supplements, 55 percent try to get enough calcium, and 52 percent make a conscious effort to avoid eating too much salt and sodium.

On the down side, Americans are making less of an effort in trying to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet foods. Forty-six percent (down from 52% in 1984) now state that they try a lot to avoid sugar.

Only 33 percent of Americans try to avoid caffeine in beverages, and the same proportion try to avoid foods with additives. Twenty-eight percent report that they try to eat fish twice a week compared with 34 percent in 1985 when the question was first included.

FAT AND CHOLESTEROL

Americans are paying attention to information about the dangers of too much cholesterol and fat. Fifty-eight percent of adults in the United States try a lot to avoid eating too much fat, a 4 percentage point increase over the 1987 and 1988 surveys. And 50 percent of Americans now report that they make the same effort in trying to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products, and fatty meats. This proportion has climbed substantially since the 1987 survey, when the figure stood at 42 percent.

While it is heartening to see Americans responding to the dangers of too much cholesterol and fat, disturbing trends in other areas are emerging. People appear to be less concerned with sugar and losing interest in eating fish. And despite our growing understanding of the benefits of fiber, the proportion of Americans who try a lot to eat fiber has remained unchanged since 1983.

NUTRITION AND EXERCISE

Doctors and weight-loss specialists have increasingly been advocating the combination of good diet and exercise as a two-part method

TABLE 4-1

TRENDS IN SOME KEY ASPECTS OF DIET AND NUTRITION

			Those Who Try a Lot			
Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	Change Since 1983
Get enough vitamins and minerals in foods or in supplements	63	63	59	57	58	-5
Eat enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits and vegetables	59	59	60	60	60	+1
Avoid eating too much fat	55	56	54	54	58	+3
Avoid eating too much salt or sodium	53	54	54	48	52	-1
Avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	51	50	49	47	46	-5
Get enough calcium in food or in supplements	50	57	54	53	55	+5
Avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products and fatty meats	42	42	42	48	50	+8
Avoid caffeine in beverages such as coffee, tea and certain soda pop	x	37	34	33	33	-4*
Avoid foods that contain additives, such as preservatives, colorings and artificial flavorings	x	33	36	35	33	0*
Eat fish twice a week	x	34	33	28	28	-6*
Eat vegetables in the cabbage family, such as cabbage, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower	x	62	59	60	61	-1*

x = Not asked.   ** = Change since 1985.*

Note: Twenty-seven percent of adults "try a lot" in eight or more of the eleven areas; 53% in three to seven areas; and 20% in two or fewer of the areas.

TABLE 4-2

NUTRITION/EXERCISE INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

			Nutrition/Exercise Index*			
	Base		High on Both Nutrition and Exercise	High on Nutrition Only	High on Exercise Only	Not High on Nutrition or Exercise
Total	1250	%	13	13	22	50
Sex						
Male	595	%	11	10	30	47
Female	655	%	15	16	14	52
Age						
18-29 years	303	%	12	5	33	49
30-39 years	300	%	14	9	23	53
40-49 years	213	%	13	18	19	48
50-64 years	239	%	16	20	17	44
65 and over	192	%	11	19	12	55
Education						
Not high school graduate	176	%	12	12	20	54
High school graduate	438	%	12	14	21	51
Some college	315	%	12	15	24	47
Four-year college graduate	317	%	17	11	21	48
Occupation						
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	10	11	30	48
Clerical, sales	201	%	17	12	16	53
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	15	12	25	47
Self-Described Health Status						
Excellent	319	%	19	11	28	40
Very good or good	745	%	12	13	21	53
Fair or poor	181	%	9	17	18	54
Body Weight Index						
Underweight	214	%	15	13	24	46
Within range	292	%	14	11	26	46
Overweight	673	%	12	14	20	52

**Those who score "high" on the nutrition index and exercise strenuously three times a week are "high on both;" those who score "high" on the nutrition index but do not exercise strenuously three times a week are "high on nutrition only;" those who exercise strenuously three times a week but do not score "high" on the nutrition index are "high on exercise only;" and those who do not score "high" on the nutrition index and do not exercise strenuously three times a week are "not high on nutrition or exercise."*

to promote general well-being and maintain or lose weight. Thirty-seven percent of adults who exercise strenuously also score highly on the nutrition index; that is, they practice at least eight of the eleven diet and nutrition habits. But half of those who exercise strenuously only practice between three and six habits, and 13 percent practice even fewer. The figures are worse for those who "never" exercise strenuously. Only 19 percent score "high" on the nutrition index, 55 percent fall into the middle range, and over one-quarter (27%) practice fewer than three of the diet and nutrition habits.

The Nutrition/Exercise Index shows that 13 percent of adults score highly on nutrition aspects *and* exercise strenuously three or more days per week (Table 4-2). Another 13 percent score highly with regard to nutrition only, and 22 percent exercise frequently and strenuously but do not score highly when it comes to their diet. One-half of Americans do neither.

Women are slightly more likely than men to score highly on the nutrition index *and* exercise strenuously and frequently, as are college graduates and those who regard their health as "excellent."

Looking at those who score highly on nutrition only or exercise strenuously only, women are more likely to be conscious of nutrition, whereas men are more likely to exercise. Older adults are more concerned with nutrition, while younger ones are putting themselves through vigorous workouts more often. People who consider their health to be "excellent" are more likely to exercise as opposed to watching their eating habits, whereas those who rate their health as "fair" or "poor" behave the opposite.

The Americans who ignore nutritional concerns *and* lead a more sedentary lifestyle tend to be women, less educated, overweight, and less positive about their own health status.

SECTION FIVE

REGULAR MEDICAL TESTS

More than half of Americans report that they have a dental exam more often than once a year, an increase of 9 percentage points in the past six years.

BLOOD PRESSURE READING

Eighty-four percent of adults in America report that they have their blood pressure checked at least once a year (Table 5-1). This number has changed little since 1983.

There is, however, a decrease in the percentage who report that they have their blood pressure checked "more often than once a year" (54% vs. 57% in 1988). Nonetheless, this is not a sign that Americans see this vital test as less important. Twenty-nine percent (up from 26% last year) now report that they have their blood pressure checked "once a year," maintaining the overall level of those who have their pressure checked at least once a year.

People in the West are least likely to have their blood pressure read at least once a year (78%), while people in the South — perhaps reflecting the older population in this area — are the most likely to do so (87%). Women are far more likely than men to have their blood pressure checked (89% vs. 78%), as are older Americans (those 50+) in comparison to their younger counterparts (89% vs. 81%).

CHOLESTEROL TESTING

Americans are paying more attention to cholesterol. Over half (53%) now report having their cholesterol checked at least once a year (Table 5-1). This is four per-

TABLE 5-1
TRENDS IN MEDICAL EXAMS AND TESTS

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1250 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	Change
Blood Pressure Screen						Since 1983
More often than once a year	52 } 82	59 } 87	56 } 84	57 } 83	54 } 84	+2
Once a year	30	28	28	26	29	
Every two years	6	5	6	6	5	
Every three or four years	2	3	3	1	2	
Every five years or less often	3	3	2	3	3	
Never	5	2	3	5	4	
Not sure	2	1	2	3	2	
Cholesterol Test						Since 1985
More often than once a year	x	20 } 48	19 } 45	21 } 49	24 } 53	+5
Once a year	x	28	26	28	29	
Every two years	x	7	7	6	6	
Every three or four years	x	4	4	4	3	
Every five years or less often	x	6	5	5	5	
Never	x	29	34	32	30	
Not sure	x	5	4	4	3	
Dental Exam						Since 1983
More often than once a year	44 } 71	46 } 74	50 } 75	47 } 71	53 } 75	+4
Once a year	27	28	25	24	22	
Every two years	8	7	6	8	5	
Every three or four years	4	3	4	4	3	
Every five years or less often	11	4	4	4	4	
Never	11	11	10	11	12	
Not sure	3	1	1	2	1	

x = *Not asked*

centage points higher than one year ago, and eight percentage points higher than the level reported in 1987. Not only are Americans attempting to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, they are also becoming increasingly committed to monitoring their cholesterol levels through annual testing procedures.

Once again, women are more likely than men to have their cholesterol checked annually (57% vs. 50%). Similarly, older Americans, and those whose self-reported health status as only "fair" or "poor," are more likely than others to have their cholesterol monitored at least every twelve months.

DENTAL EXAMS

Three out of four adults in the United States report that they visit their dentist for a checkup at least once a year. This is four percentage points higher than the number reporting yearly exams in 1983 (Table 5-1). The frequency of dental exams is also on the rise, since more than half (53%) of adult Americans now report that they have a dental exam "more often than once a year," an increase of 9 percentage points in the past six years.

Younger adults, those who are more educated, and those who command the highest household incomes are the most likely to have annual dental checkups. In a reverse of the blood pressure and cholesterol test findings, Americans whose self-reported health status is "excellent" are much more likely to visit their dentist for an annual exam than those who regard their health as merely "fair" or "poor."

PAP SMEAR AND BREAST SELF-EXAM FOR WOMEN

Seventy-six percent of American women report having a Pap smear test to detect the presence of cancerous cells at least every two years (Table 5-2). Over the course of the seven surveys, this finding is basically unchanged. The majority of women (55%) report having this test "once a year," while 15 percent have one "more often than once a year."

TABLE 5-2

TRENDS IN TESTS AND SELF-EXAMS FOR WOMEN

Base: Women only

Base	1983 Survey 646 %		1985 Survey 640 %		1987 Survey 634 %		1988 Survey 652 %		1989 Survey 655 %	
Pap smear										
More often than once a year	18		15		17		15		15	
Once a year	49	75	54	78	51	75	57	79	55	76
Every two years	8		9		7		7		6	
Every three years	4		3		4		3		6	
Every four or five years	3		3		3		3		4	
Every six years or less often	2		3		3		3		3	
Never	13		12		10		9		10	
Not applicable (vol.)	1		1		2		1		1	
Not sure	2		1		2		2		1	
Breast Self-Exam										
At least once a month	37		48		42		51		44	
Several times a year	30		30		29		24		24	
Once a year	9		8		9		7		9	
Less than once a year	4		3		4		3		4	
Never	15		9		13		12		15	
I never do it — doctor does it (vol.)	2		1		2		1		3	
Not applicable (vol.)	*		–		1		*		*	
Not sure	1		1		1		*		*	

*Less than 0.5%

Women in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to have a Pap smear test at least every two years (82% vs. 71%). Younger women, women with higher household incomes, and those who report their health as "excellent" are also more likely to have a Pap smear test every two years.

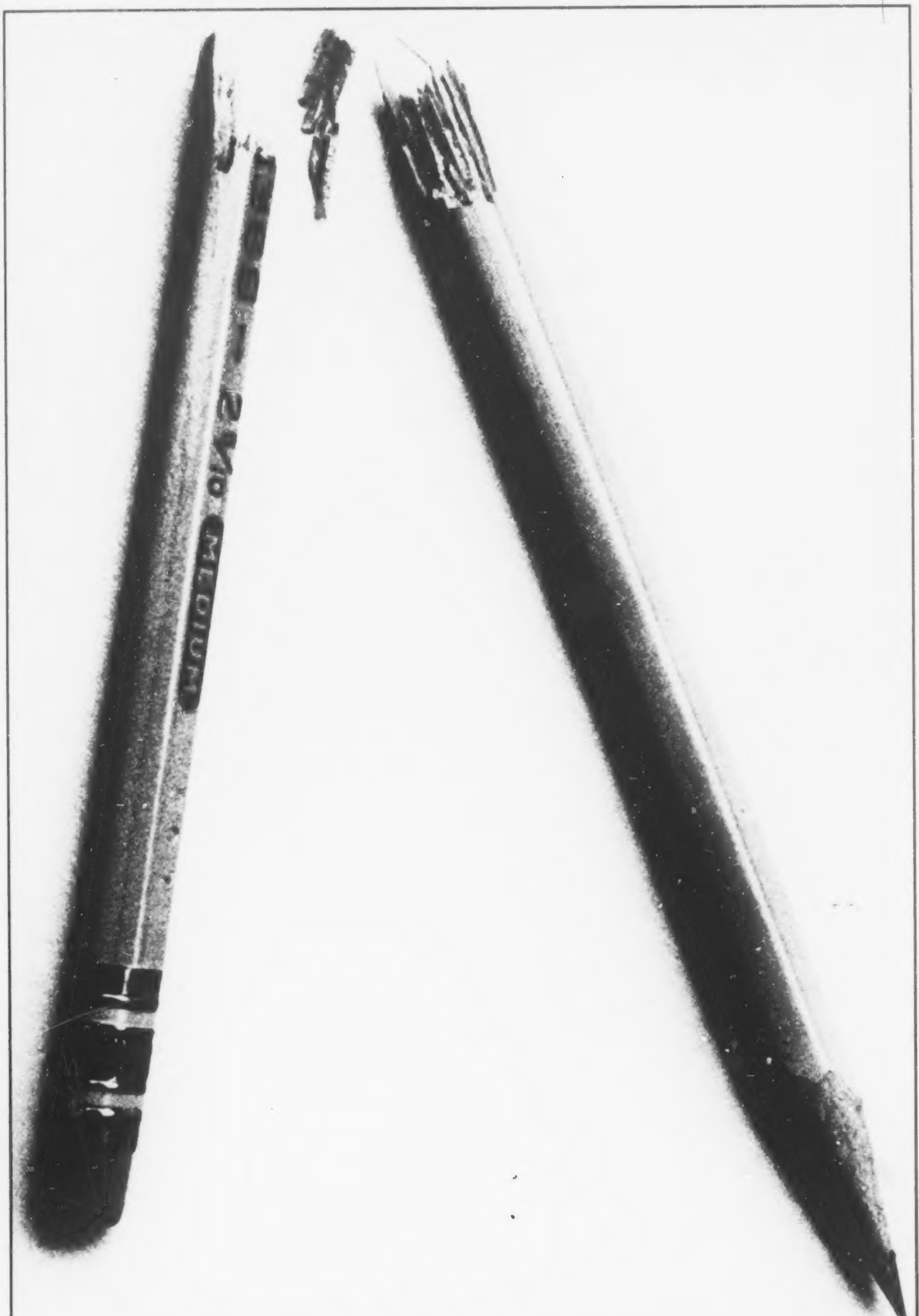
Forty-four percent of American women say they examine their breasts to detect any possible cancer "at least once a month" (Table 5-2). This is 7 percentage points higher than the 37 percent who reported the same six years ago.

Women over the age of fifty are more likely than younger women to conduct these exams on themselves (49% vs. 41%). Fifteen percent of women state that they "never" examine their breasts for any possible signs of cancer, while an additional 3 percent report that they never do the exam because their doctor does.

SECTION SIX

STRESS

Forty percent of people who smoke report that they feel a great deal of stress at least several times a week. Only 27 percent of nonsmokers say the same.



FEELINGS OF STRESS

Fifteen percent of adult Americans report feeling "a *great* deal of stress almost every day." A further 15 percent say they feel under great stress several days a week, while another 30 percent report the same feelings once or twice a week (Table 6-1). This finding — that well over half of the adult population feels under great stress at least once a week—has held constant over the past four years, suggesting that Americans do not perceive their life as getting any simpler.

Adults in the East are the most likely to say they feel "great stress" at least several times a week (35%), while those in the Midwest and the South are the least likely to say so (27% and 28%, respectively). Women are slightly more likely than men (32% vs. 28%) to report feeling great stress several times a week. Adults in their forties are the most likely age group to experience feelings of stress.

The frequency of stress, or perhaps the vulnerability to these feelings, appears to be related to how a person feels about his or her health overall. While only 27 percent of people who report

TABLE 6-1

TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF STRESS

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1250 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %
Frequency of Stress					
Almost every day	16	14	17	18	15
Several days a week	12	13	15	15	15
Once or twice a week	27	33	30	30	30
Less often than once a week	29	30	27	27	26
Never	16	10	10	9	12
Not sure	1	1	1	1	1
Steps to Control Stress					
Yes, take steps to control	59	69	68	69	65
No, don't take steps	38	31	30	30	34
Not sure	3	1	1	1	1
Sleep					
6 hours or less	25	26	27	26	25
7-8 hours	64	64	61	62	64
9 hours or more	10	9	11	11	11
Not sure	1	*	1	1	*
Socializing with Others					
Once a week or more	84	85	83	84	85
Less than once a week	16	15	17	16	14
Not sure	*	*	1	1	*

*Less than 0.5%

their health status as excellent say they feel under great stress several times a week, the figure rises dramatically (to 45%) for those whose self-reported health status is only fair or poor.

Whether or not a person smokes appears to be related to his or her level of stress. Forty percent of people who smoke report that they feel a great deal of stress in their lives at least several times a week. Only 27 percent of nonsmokers say the same.

The 1988 survey found that educational levels, income levels, and the density of urbanism directly related to the levels of stress that were reported by Americans. The 1989 survey, however, finds that these distinctions are becoming increasingly blurred, suggesting that stress is slowly permeating all levels of society irrespective of socioeconomic status.

CONTROLLING STRESS

Almost one-third of the adults in the United States report feeling a great deal of stress at least several times a week. Not surprisingly, people are aware of the need to try to control this. About two-thirds of Americans report that they "consciously take steps to control or reduce the stress" in their lives (Table 6-1). An almost identical percentage (64%) report that they usually sleep seven or eight hours each night, and a solid 85 percent "socialize with close friends, relatives, or neighbors" at least once a week or more. The nation's sleep patterns and level of social activity have remained constant throughout the seven Prevention Index studies.

This year, however, there is a significant decrease in the percentage of people who are attempting to control or reduce stress in their lives. The 1988 survey found that 69 percent of Americans reported consciously attempting to control stress in their lives, whereas only 65 percent now report such efforts. The oldest Americans (age 65+) and those with less education are the least likely to attempt to control stress in their lives, whereas people in professional or managerial occupations are the most likely to do so.

Smokers are less likely than nonsmokers to report that they get seven to eight hours of sleep per night (56% vs. 66%) as are less educated Americans, those with lower household incomes, and those with less prestigious occupations. Americans in their forties are the least likely to socialize at least once a week, whereas the youngest adults (18 to 29 years of age) and the oldest (65+ years) are the most likely to report high levels of social activity.

SECTION SEVEN

SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

The incidence of smoking has remained relatively constant since 1983. A solid core of smokers remains, despite the known risks of such behavior.

SMOKING AND NONSMOKING

Twenty-eight percent of American adults report that they smoke cigarettes. This has remained relatively constant since 1983, but it is down 15 percentage points since 1974 (Table 7-1). Still, this indicates just how hard it is to move towards a "smoke-free society." A solid core of diehard smokers remain, irrespective of known risks of such behavior.

Whether or not the public believes in a connection, it is clear from the survey that smoking and health status are directly correlated. Eighty-two percent of those who report their health to be excellent are nonsmokers, compared with 68 percent of those who describe their health as fair or poor.

The people who are most likely to be nonsmokers are 65 and older, more educated, have higher household incomes, and work in a professional or managerial capacity.

Six percent of Americans report that although they do not smoke cigarettes, they do smoke a pipe or cigar or use chewing tobacco. Combined with cigarette usage, this means that just over one-third (34%) of Americans are using some form of tobacco. Ten percent of cigarette smokers also smoke a pipe or cigar or use chewing tobacco.

CIGARETTE SMOKERS

Who are the people who ignore the warnings and evidence about the dangers of smoking? They tend to be male, less educated, in a

TABLE 7-1

TRENDS IN SMOKING AND NONSMOKING

Base	1974 1407 %	1975 1556 %	1978 1347 %	1983 1252 %	1984 1252 %	1985 1256 %	1986 1250 %	1987 1250 %	1988 1250 %	1989 1250 %
Smoke now	43	43	39	30	28	30	27	28	26	28
Do not smoke	57	57	61	70	72	70	72	72	74	71

Note: Because of population growth, the change in the absolute numbers of smoking adults can, of course, be less than the change in the percentage of smoking adults.
Sources are eight national surveys of adults aged 18 and older conducted by Louis Harris and Associates.

lower income bracket, and in blue-collar occupations (Table 7-2). They are certainly much more likely than nonsmokers to be risktakers. They are not as likely to wear seat belts, they are not as supportive of mandatory seat belt laws, and they are not as strict in making their own children wear seat belts. They are more likely to have experimented with drugs at least once in their lives, to have someone in their household who smokes in bed (not surprisingly), to drink more, and when they do drink they are more likely to do so immoderately.

Smokers do not take care of their health as carefully as do nonsmoking adults. They have their blood pressure and cholesterol checked less frequently. They do not visit their dentist as often. They are certainly less likely to restrict their intake of salt, fat, high-cholesterol foods, sugar, caffeine and additives. They are not as likely to eat vitamin- and calcium-enriched foods, fish, or high-fiber foods. They are less likely to have walked as a form of exercise, and even those smokers who do walk tend to walk shorter distances than their nonsmoking counterparts.

TABLE 7-2

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS: SMOKERS VS. NONSMOKERS

	1989 Survey	Smokers	Nonsmokers
Base	1250	339	898
	%	%	%
Nonsmoking and Restricted Use of Alcohol			
Do not smoke cigarettes	71	-	100
Drink alcohol moderately	51	52	50
(Drink alcohol moderately or do not drink at all)	90	84	92
Exercise and Weight Control			
Get strenuous exercise three or more days a week	35	32	36
Are within the weight range recommended for their height, build, and sex*	24	23	24
(Are not overweight)	39	40	38
Diet and Nutrition			
Try a lot to get enough vitamins and minerals	58	55	59
Try a lot to eat enough fiber	60	55	62
Try a lot to avoid eating too much fat	58	52	60
Try a lot to avoid eating too much salt or sodium	52	46	54
Try a lot to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	46	43	47
Try a lot to get enough calcium	55	50	56
Try a lot to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods	50	45	51
Try a lot to avoid caffeine in beverages	33	20	38
Control of Stress			
Feel under great stress frequently	30	40	27
Socialize with friends or relatives once a week or more	85	89	83
Get seven or eight hours sleep most nights	64	56	66
Take specific steps to control or reduce stress	65	63	66
Periodic Examinations and Tests			
Have a blood pressure reading at least once a year	84	81	85
Have a dental checkup at least once a year	75	70	77
Have a blood test for cholesterol	53	47	56
Safety Precautions			
Say that no one in their home smokes in bed	90	80	94
Say they take specific steps to avoid accidents in and around the home	80	82	79
Say they have a smoke detector in their home	85	85	85
Drivers who say they drive at or below the speed limit all the time**	49	51	48
Drivers who say they either never drive after drinking or don't drink at all**	79	75	80
Say they wear seat belts all the time when in the front seat of a car	63	55	66
Tried drugs at least once	36	46	33
Done walking as exercise in past month	75	67	77

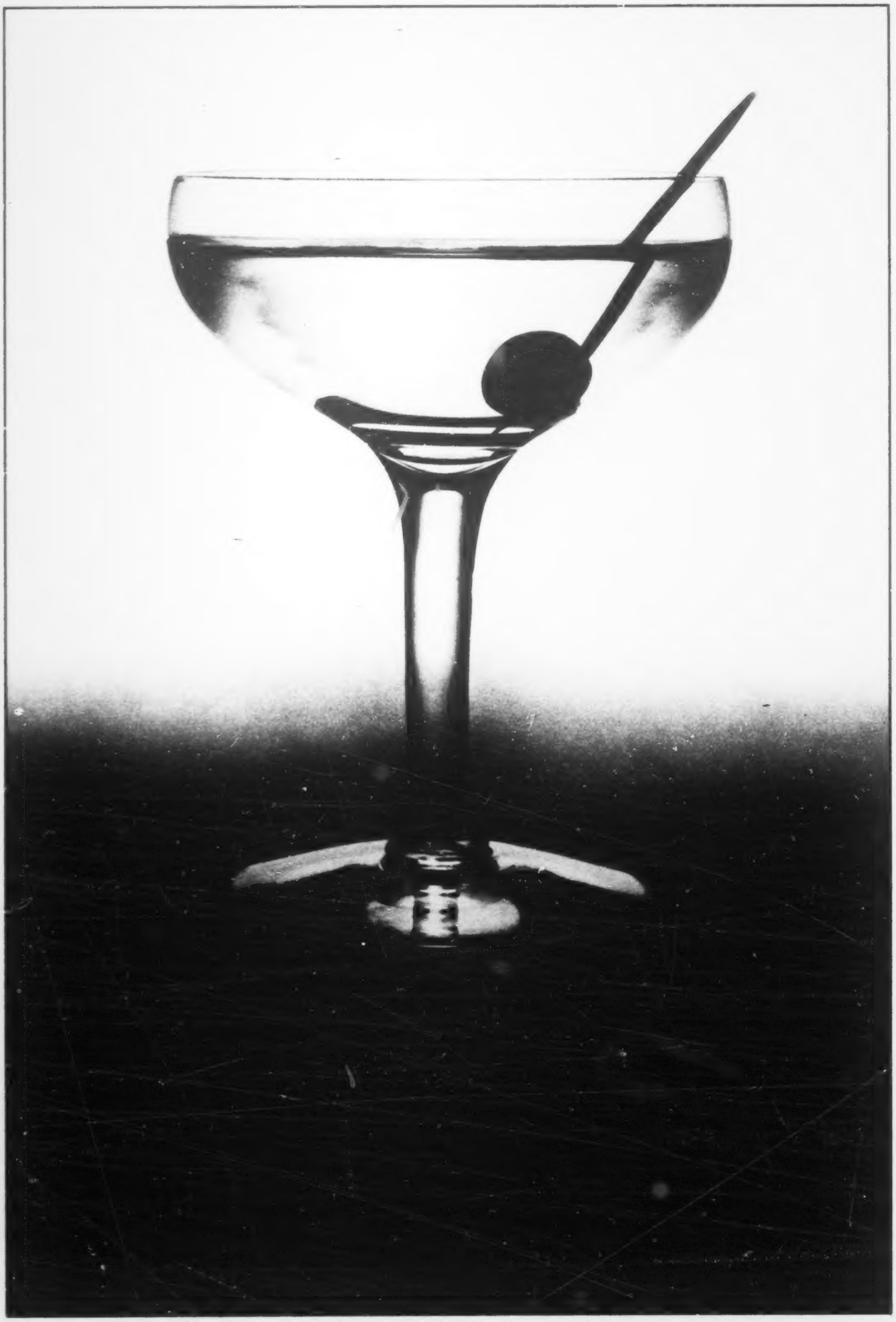
**Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life InsuranceCompany tables were used for the classification. Base: 1015*

***Base: Drivers only (1121)*

SECTION EIGHT

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

Moderate drinkers are a very different group from teetotalers. The highest proportion of moderate drinkers live in urban areas, are female, are 50+, and are more educated.



ALCOHOL USE

Thirty-nine percent of adult Americans report that they "never consume alcoholic beverages" (Table 8-1). Fifty-one percent of adults drink three drinks or less on days when they do drink and are thus termed "moderate drinkers." Nine percent of adults in the United States drink no fewer than four drinks on each day that they do drink, and are thus termed "heavy drinkers."

The proportion of nondrinkers is largest among residents of the South (where 50% "never" consume alcohol), those in rural areas (48% of whom do not drink), women (44% never drink), Americans aged 65 and older (57% do not drink), and the least educated (64% of people who did not finish high school do not consume alcohol). A majority (59%) of those who describe their health as fair or poor do not drink.

Moderate drinkers are a very different group. The highest proportion of moderate drinkers reside in urban areas, are female, are 50+ years old and are more educated. Almost nine out of ten Americans who describe their health as excellent and report

TABLE 8-1

TRENDS IN USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %		1985 Survey 1256 %		1987 Survey 1250 %		1988 Survey 1250 %		1989 Survey 1250 %	
Frequency of Alcohol Consumption										
Never	34		33		36		39		39	
Less than										
1 day a month	16		15		13		17		16	
1 to 3 days a month	16		20		19		18		16	
1 to 2 days a week	19		19		21		14		18	
3 to 4 days a week	7	65	6	66	5	64	5	61	5	60
5 to 6 days a week	2		2		1		2		2	
Daily/7 days a week	6		4		5		5		5	
Not sure	*		*		*		*		*	
Quantity of Alcohol Consumption										
1 drink	21		22		21		21		23	
2 drinks	22	54	23	55	20	50	21	50	18	51
3 drinks	10		10		9		8		9	
4 drinks	5		4		6		4		4	
5 or more drinks	6		7		8		7		5	
Not sure	1		*		*		*		1	
Recreational Drugs										
Frequently	x		2		*		1		1	
Sometimes	x		7		1		1		1	
Only occasionally**	x		x		4		3		4	
Never	x		91		94		95		94	
Not sure	x		*		-		*		-	

x = Not asked

**Less than 0.5%*

***The "only occasionally" category was added in 1987 and 1988.*

that they consume alcohol do so moderately.

DRUG USE

An overwhelming 94 percent of Americans report that they "never use any recreational* drugs such as marijuana, speed, and downers" (Table 8-1). This finding has remained statistically unchanged since 1987, although it has risen slightly since the question was first asked in 1985 (when 91% reported that they never used recreational drugs).

Women are slightly more likely than men to report that they never use drugs, and older Americans (those aged 40+) are more likely to avoid drugs than those under 40. Nevertheless, younger Americans are continuing to stay away from illegal drugs, a finding that first became apparent in the 1987 survey. The percentage of younger adults abstaining from drug use rose by ten percentage points between 1984 and 1987, from 79 to 89 percent.

DRUG EXPERIMENTATION

This year's survey examined the drug issue in some additional depth. It found that more than one-third (36%) of Americans admit to trying "at least one drug once or twice" in their life "to see what it was like." Of these 36 percent, over half (53%, or 19% of the total population) have "taken drugs a few times." Thirteen percent of people who have taken drugs a few times have taken a drug in the last month, though these people represent only 2 percent of the adult population. Almost half (49%) of the people who used drugs in the past month have taken a drug in the last week.

A majority (57%) of adults between 18 and 39 admit that they have tried drugs at least once in their lives. The percentage dwindles to a mere 7 percent of Americans 50 years of age and older.

Drug experimentation directly correlates with income and educational levels. Forty-two percent of college graduates have tried drugs at least once, but only 25 percent of people who did not finish high school report the same. Forty-two percent of people whose household incomes exceed $35,000 have tried drugs, compared with only 28 percent of those whose households earn less than $15,000.

RELATIONSHIP AMONG ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE

Adults who report that they drink alcohol are more likely to smoke cigarettes than those who do not drink. Sixty-nine percent of adults who drink do not smoke cigarettes, but the figure rises to 77 percent for those who do not drink at all. Similarly, only 32 percent of cigarette smokers do not drink alcohol, whereas 42 percent of nonsmokers do not drink.

Cigarette smokers who drink alcohol are also less likely to be mod-

---

**The word "recreational" is used in the survey instrument to encourage accurate and truthful responses and in no way should be taken to represent the opinion of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.*

erate drinkers when compared to nonsmokers who also drink. Seventy-six percent of smokers who drink do so moderately, while 87 percent of nonsmokers report the same.

Cigarette smokers are also more likely to use illegal drugs. Ninety-five percent of nonsmokers, 97 percent of adults who do not drink, and 92 percent of those who do drink report that they "never" use any illegal drugs. Only 89 percent of smokers make that claim.

TABLE 8-2

PERCENT OF THOSE RESTRICTING THEIR ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE BY VARIOUS CHARACTERISTICS

	Base		Do Not Drink Alcohol	Drinkers Who Drink Alcohol Moderately*	Never Use Any Recreational Drugs
Total	1250	%	39	84	94
Region					
East	304	%	31	80	93
South	394	%	50	85	94
Midwest	303	%	42	83	95
West	249	%	29	87	93
Urbanism					
Central City	364	%	35	88	93
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	38	81	94
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	48	84	94
Sex					
Male	595	%	34	77	92
Female	655	%	44	91	96
Race					
White	1057	%	36	84	94
Black	101	%	49	91	98
Hispanic	68	%	55	62	89
Age					
18-29 years	303	%	33	74	88
30-39 years	300	%	29	81	90
40-49 years	213	%	34	89	97
50-64 years	239	%	50	90	98
65 and over	192	%	57	98	99
Education					
Not high school graduate	176	%	64	75	93
High school graduate	438	%	43	83	95
Some college	315	%	35	80	93
Four-year college graduate	317	%	24	90	93
Household Income					
$7,500 or less	97	%	52	79	95
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	53	85	96
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	44	85	91
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	33	84	94
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	31	89	94
$50,001 and over	232	%	21	81	92
Occupation					
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	35	74	94
Clerical, sales	201	%	38	88	92
Professional, manager or proprietor	298	%	25	87	91
Self-Described Health Status					
Excellent	319	%	31	88	95
Very good or good	745	%	37	83	93
Fair or poor	181	%	59	77	96
Stress Control					
Take steps to control stress	809	%	39	83	94
Do not take steps	423	%	41	84	95
Feeling of Stress					
Feel stress at least several times a week	380	%	34	79	92
Feel stress less often	859	%	42	86	94

**Based on the 60% of all adults who sometimes drink; this proportion is not necessarily constant across subgroups. "Moderate" drinking is defined here as 3 or fewer drinks on a day in which alcohol is consumed.*

SECTION NINE

HOME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

It is still the least privileged who are the least likely to have a smoke detector in their home.

Eight out of ten Americans "take special steps or precautions to avoid accidents" in and around their homes (Table 9-1). This is significantly higher than the 72 percent who reported the same in the first Index survey in 1983, but is statistically unchanged in the four years since the 1985 survey.

The use of smoke detectors, however, continues to rise, with 85 percent of adults in the United States reporting that they have a smoke detector in their home. This number has risen dramatically since 1983, when only two-thirds of homes had smoke detectors. As in 1988, 90 percent of Americans report that no one in their household smokes in bed.

Four-year college graduates are the least likely to say that they take steps to avoid accidents in the home (73% vs. 80% of all adults), as are those whose households earn annual incomes of $50,000 and more. Otherwise, there are no patterns that emerge as to specific groups of Americans who try to avoid accidents in the home.

Homes in the East are more likely than those in the South to have smoke detectors (92% vs. 80%). The presence of smoke detectors also appears to be linked to higher socioeconomic groups. Only 72 percent of adults who did not finish high school report that they have smoke detectors in their homes, compared with 90 percent of college graduates. And 79 percent of households who earn less than $7,500 annually have smoke detectors, while a much greater 92 percent of households earning $35,000 or more do.

The gaps among those who do and do not have smoke detectors continues to narrow slightly, but it is still the least privileged who are the least likely to have such a vital safety device in their homes.

TABLE 9-1
TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF SAFETY AT HOME

Base	1983 Survey 1251 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	Change Since 1983 1250 %
Precautions at Home						
Yes, take steps	72	80	81	82	80	+8
Smoke Detector						
Have a smoke detector	67	76	82	81	85	+18
Smoking in Bed						
Yes, someone smokes in bed	11	9	8	10	10	-1

* Less than 0.5%.

SECTION TEN

AUTO SAFETY

> ***The group least likely to wear seat belts is also least likely to respect speed limits. Only one-third of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 drive at or below the speed limit.***

WARNING
SPEED TRAP
IN
OPERATION

The number of Americans who always wear seat belts when they are in the front seat of a car continues to rise. The 1983 survey found that only 19 percent of adults reported wearing seat belts all the time when they were in the front seat of a car (Table 10-1). The figure now stands at 63 percent, a three point increase since last year, a six point increase since 1987, and a twenty-two point increase since 1985, reflecting the dramatic impact of mandatory seat belt laws that were adopted by many states.

Nearly two-thirds of adults (65%) in states with seat belt laws obey them (Figure 10-A). Almost half of adults (48%) in states that do not require seat belt usage are also buckling up every time they get in the front seat of a car.

The gap between seat belt usage in states with and without mandatory seat belt laws is closing. Last year's gap of twenty-five percentage points has closed to seventeen points in 1989. Also encouraging is the finding that the percentage of adults in states without seat belt laws who "never" wear seat belts is declining. The 1988 survey found that 29 percent of adults in these states reported never wearing seat belts. The 1989 figure has dropped eleven points to 18 percent.

However, it is discouraging to note that younger adults (those aged 18 to 29 years) are the least likely to wear seat belts (55%), as are adults with the lowest levels of education and income (Table 10-2).

TABLE 10-1
TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF AUTO SAFETY

Base	**1983 Survey** 1251 %	**1985 Survey** 1256 %	**1987 Survey** 1250 %	**1988 Survey** 1250 %	**1989 Survey** 1250 %
Wearing Seat belts					
All the time	19	41	57	60	63
Sometimes	26	31	27	26	26
Never	53	28	15	13	11
Not applicable (vol.)	1	*	*	1	*
Not sure	*	*	*	-	*
Base	**1983 Survey** 1097 %	**1985 Survey** 1102 %	**1987 Survey** 1115 %	**1988 Survey** 1117 %	**1989 Survey** 1121 %
Driving at or Below Speed Limit					
All the time	56	50	50	51	49
Sometimes	38	45	45	44	46
Never	5	5	4	5	5
Not sure	*	*	-	-	1
Driving After Drinking					
All the time	5	3	2	3	2
Sometimes	25	25	23	19	19
Never	52	59	49	60	56
Don't drink (vol.)	16	12	25	18	23
Not sure	2	1	*	*	*

**Less than 0.5%*

TABLE 10-2

PERCENT OF THOSE TAKING AUTO SAFETY PRECAUTIONS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Base		Wear Seat Belt All the Time in Auto	Base: Those Who Drive		Never Exceed Speed Limit*	Never Drive After Drinking or Never Drink**
Total	1250	%	63	1121	%	49	79
Region							
East	304	%	60	257	%	45	73
South	394	%	64	351	%	53	85
Midwest	303	%	61	284	%	53	75
West	249	%	67	229	%	41	79
Urbanism							
Central City	364	%	65	314	%	51	79
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	64	526	%	48	76
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	59	281	%	49	84
Sex							
Male	595	%	58	555	%	44	72
Female	655	%	67	566	%	54	86
Race							
White	1057	%	64	963	%	49	78
Black	101	%	49	82	%	39	78
Hispanic	68	%	64	60	%	61	89
Age							
18 - 29 years	303	%	55	270	%	33	76
30 - 39 years	300	%	69	288	%	47	69
40 - 49 years	213	%	67	197	%	50	77
50 - 64 years	239	%	60	219	%	64	86
65 and over	192	%	66	145	%	62	91
Education							
Not high school graduate	176	%	52	126	%	58	92
High school graduate	438	%	58	390	%	52	84
Some college	315	%	66	297	%	45	74
Four-year college graduate	317	%	74	305	%	44	69
Household Income							
$7,500 or less	97	%	51	70	%	55	88
$7,501 - $15,000	156	%	51	134	%	52	84
$15,001 - $25,000	247	%	62	223	%	52	80
$25,001 - $35,000	210	%	63	192	%	52	78
$35,001 - $50,000	214	%	74	210	%	50	77
$50,001 and over	232	%	73	221	%	35	68
Occupation							
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	54	294	%	47	78
Clerical, sales	201	%	68	185	%	51	78
Professional, manager or proprietor	298	%	71	289	%	41	69

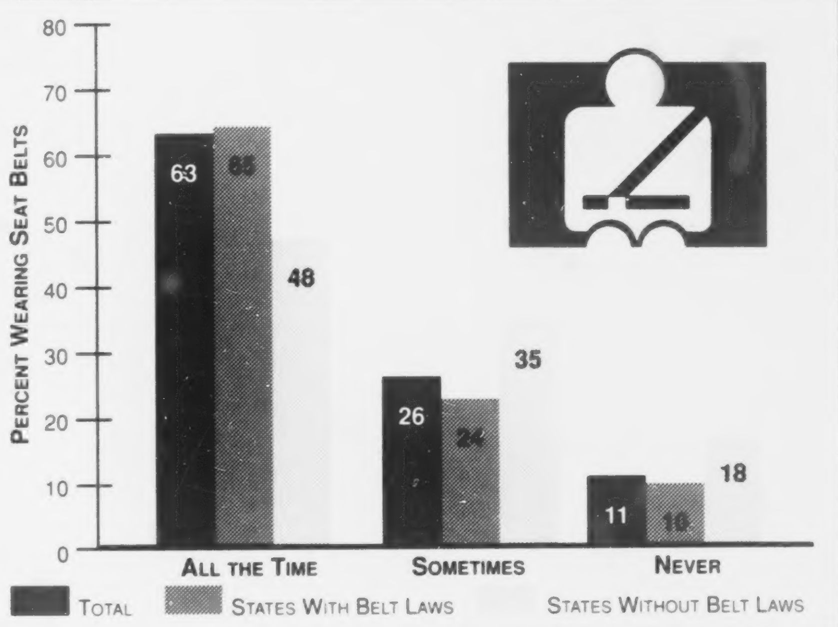
**Drivers who drive at or below the speed limit all the time.*
*** Drivers who never drive after drinking, or never drink.*

SPEEDING

Given the known correlation between speeding and highway injuries and deaths, seat belt usage is particularly critical because only half (49%) of the nation's drivers drive at or below the speed limit all of the time (Table 10-1). This percentage has remained relatively constant since 1985, although it has decreased since 1983.

The age group least likely to wear seat belts is also the group least likely to respect speed limits. Only one-third of Americans between 18 and 29 years of age drive at or below the speed limit. The picture is not completely disheartening, however, as those with lower levels of education and income (who are less likely to wear seat belts) are more likely to obey the speed limits than their more educated and wealthier counterparts. This could also result because those in higher income brackets own faster, sportier cars.

FIGURE 10-A
SEAT BELT USE — 1989



DRINKING AND DRIVING

Over half (56%) of adults who drive report that they "never" drive after they have been drinking alcoholic beverages. Another 23 percent of drivers say that they do not drink. This leaves about one-fifth (19%) of drivers who report that they "sometimes" drive after they have been drinking, and 2 percent who say that they "always" drive after drinking.

Adults who do drink and drive tend to be men rather than women (28% vs. 14%), between 30 and 39 years of age, more educated, have higher-than-average household incomes, and be in professional or managerial positions.

PROCEDURES FOR COMPUTING THE PREVENTION INDEX

The Prevention Index is developed from information collected by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. in two national surveys:

1. Self-reported practice of preventive health and safety behaviors based on a national probability sample of 1,250 adults in the continental United States 18 years of age and older.
2. Ratings on the relative importance of each of these behaviors for preventing disease and disability in the general population (scale of 1 to 10), as determined by a sample of 103 representative experts in disease prevention and health promotion.

Twenty-one of the behaviors measured in the Harris national probability survey of adults were selected for inclusion in the Prevention Index according to the following criteria:

1. A documented relationship between the health behavior and disease or disability as published in the professional literature.
2. Behaviors that are relevant to the entire adult population.
3. Behaviors that can be controlled or affected by individuals (therefore, the exclusion of important environmental determinants of health such as exposure to air pollution or industrial toxins).

Currently accepted standards of practice for each behavior were determined by thorough review of the professional literature and consultation with experts. Those standards were used to compute the practice frequencies for each of the Index health behaviors.

For continuous variables (for example, moderate alcohol consumption, exercise or frequency of dental examination), practice was determined by the prevailing consensus in the relevant professional literature and from personal consultation with researchers and spokespersons of professional organizations. For those behaviors with no clear consensus on a minimum compliance level (for example, taking steps to control stress or restricting cholesterol intake), practice was defined in terms of either always engaging in the behavior (taking steps to control stress) or of trying a lot (restricting cholesterol intake). The practice definitions for each health and safety behavior and relevant documentation are presented in the Prevention Index technical report.

The Index is computed on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 representing 100 percent of the adult population of the continental United States age 18 and over practicing all of the 21 key health behaviors. The Index is calculated by:

1. Multiplying the percentage of the adult population who report engaging in each health behavior by its experts' rating;
2. Adding the 21 products together;
3. Adjusting the resulting total to a scale of 100.

A detailed description of the development and computation of the Prevention Index and related analyses is presented in the technical report, "The Prevention Index: A Report Card on the Nation's Health," available from *Prevention* Magazine.

A NOTE ON SURVEY METHODS

The 1989 survey data in this report are based on interviews with 1,250 randomly selected adults across the country, conducted by telephone from November 6 to December 13, 1989. The overall completion rate for this survey was 59 percent of eligible households reached. The 41 percent noncompletion rate includes initial refusals, plus terminations during the course of the interview.

All seven surveys from 1983 to 1989 followed the same procedures in every detail in order to facilitate comparisons.

Harris national public cross sections are weighted to the Census Bureau's latest population parameters on sex, race, age and income. This adjusts these key variables, where necessary, to their actual proportions in the population in order to correct for subgroup variations in telephone penetration and nonresponse rates.

YOUR PERSONAL PREVENTION PROFILE

The Prevention Index takes stock of the nation's health, but you can score your own prevention profile by taking the test below.

Please carefully check "YES" or "NO" to each of the following questions.	**YES**	**NO**
1. Do you have a blood pressure reading at least once a year?	☐	☐
2. Do you go to the dentist at least once a year for treatment or a checkup?	☐	☐
Thinking about your personal diet and nutrition, do you try a lot to . . .		
3. Avoid eating too much salt or sodium?	☐	☐
4. Avoid eating too much fat?	☐	☐
5. Eat enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables?	☐	☐
6. Avoid eating too many high cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products, and fatty meats?	☐	☐
7. Get enough vitamins and minerals in foods or in supplements?	☐	☐
8. Avoid getting too much sugar and sweet food?	☐	☐
9. Is your body weight within the recommended range for your sex, height, and bone structure?	☐	☐
10. Do you exercise strenuously (that is, so you breathe heavily and your heart and pulse rate are accelerated for a period lasting at least 20 minutes) three days or more a week?	☐	☐
11. Do you smoke cigarettes now?	☐	☐
12. Do you consciously take steps to control or reduce stress in your life?	☐	☐
13. Do you usually sleep a total of 7 to 8 hours during each 24-hour day? (if you usually sleep either more or less than this, please mark "no".)	☐	☐
14. Do you socialize with close friends, relatives or neighbors at least once a week?	☐	☐
15. In general, when you drink alcoholic beverages, do you consume less than 14 drinks* per week and less than five on any single day? (Mark "yes" only if the answer to both parts of this question is "yes". If you never drink at all, also mark "yes")	☐	☐
16. Do you wear a seat belt all the time when you are in the front seat of a car?	☐	☐
17. Do you drive at or below the speed limit all the time? (If you don't drive, please mark "yes".)	☐	☐
18. Do you ever drive after drinking (If you don't drive or if you don't drink, please mark "no".)	☐	☐
19. Do you have a smoke detector in your home?	☐	☐
20. Does anyone in your household smoke in bed?	☐	☐
21. Do you take any special steps or precautions to avoid accidents in and around your home?	☐	☐

* By a "drink," we mean a drink with a shot of hard liquor, a can or bottle of beer, or a glass of wine.

The correct answer for questions 11, 18 and 20 is "no." The correct answer for all the other questions is "yes." Add up your total number of correct responses. Then, divide that number by 21, which tells you the percentage of the 21 Prevention Index behaviors that you practice.

ADDITIONAL REPORTS AVAILABLE:

The Prevention Index: A Report Card on the Nation's Health, technical report.

Prevention in America: Steps People Take – or Fail to Take – for Better Health. In-depth reports on each of the seven Louis Harris surveys for *Prevention* Magazine. Reports are numbered from 1 to 7, and cover the surveys conducted in 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1989, respectively.

Prevention in America: The Experts Rate 65 Steps to Better Health, 1983 survey conducted by Louis Harris & Associates for *Prevention* Magazine.

TO ORDER, WRITE:

The Prevention Index
33 East Minor Street
Emmaus, PA 18098

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Tom Dybdahl
The Prevention Index
33 East Minor Street
Emmaus, PA 18098
(215) 967-8124

OR

Phoebe A. Wilkinson
Research Associate
Louis Harris & Associates, Inc.
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10111
(212) 698-9600

AMERICA'S LEADING HEALTH MAGAZINE

PREVENTION®